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The man stepped into the room and closed the door softly behind him.

## Gold Bullet Sport; OR, THE KNIGHTS OF THE OVERLAND. BY HON. WM. F. CODY, (BUFFALO BILL.)

CHAPTER IV.  
A THIRD SURPRISE.  
In a pleasant room of the Central City House a woman paced the floor, her long trail rustling after her like the breakers upon the beach.  
Upon the table, whereon stood the lamp, was a pile of gold, amounting to several thousand dollars, and in her clenched hand she held the miniature thrown into the basket by Hugh Lambert.  
The face was as strangely beautiful as it was strangely sad, and the miniature was a perfect likeness of the maiden, though taken perhaps several years before, for it seemed a trifle younger; but there were the same red-gold hair braided in heavy coils, the same black eyes with their sweeping lashes, delicately penciled brows, and ruby lips, which with every word or smile displayed the pearliest teeth.  
Upon the hotel books the maiden was registered as Miss Violet Markham, of New York city, and she had told Judge Wolf that she had been brought up for the stage, both as a vocalist and actress, and had saved up a small sum with which to prosecute a search for a person, said to be in the mines of Colorado, and who held a secret regarding her parentage which she wished to know.  
When robbed by Captain Satan, she had been in despair; but now she had more gold than ever she had possessed before, owing to the generosity of the miners, and she was free to continue her search once more.  
This was all that was known of the lovely singer, and no other questions were asked her, for her face seemed a guarantee for her truthfulness; though, when it became known that a young miner had thrown into the basket as his contribution, a diamond-studded likeness of the maiden herself, and that Dead Shot—or "Tarleton," as he was registered at the Central City House—had fainted away when he caught sight of her face, there were some who believed that she had a history that was in some way mirrored in her sad face.  
Now, as she paced the room with graceful sweep, the brows were contracted in deep and painful thought, and the lips moved in low utterance:  
"Strange—oh, so very strange! I cannot account for it, and this doubt as to who and what they are nearly drives me mad. In some way those two men must be connected with my past.  
"Hugh Lambert they call him—a young miner who works a claim in the mountains, has universal bad luck, and is as poor as poverty, they say; yet he had this miniature of myself, set in gold and studded with diamonds worth as much as that pile of gold yonder.  
"Where did he get it? and who can he be?  
"Hugh Lambert? I do not remember the name.  
"And the other—Dead Shot they call him; the man who behaved so bravely, and beat off the Knights of the Overland single-handed; a splendid-looking man, and a gambler, they say, though no one seems to know aught regarding him; he fainted dead away when he saw my face. Who can he be?  
"Tarleton is the name on the register, but that tells me nothing.  
"I must see these two men, and know why it is

that my face moves them so. First, I will go to the miner in the mountains, for he had my picture. I can ride there on horseback, and one of those good miners will guide me; I will go down at once and make arrangements for an early start, for the storm is about over."  
So saying, she left her room, locking the door after her, and descended to the hotel-office, where Judge Wolf sat, conversing with a tall man, well-dressed, and with heavy beard, nearly concealing his face.  
Both looked up as Violet Markham entered the little room, and the tall man sprang to his feet, his face livid, while from his lips broke the cry:  
"A God in Heaven! From the very grave!"  
Without another word the man fled from the hotel as though from a weird being of another world.  
"Miss Markham, your presence in our little town seems to have moved three men deeply," said Judge Wolf, gazing upon the maiden with a look of surprise.  
"Judge Wolf, who was that man?"  
"His name is Colonel Darke, at least he is known as such here. He owns the Deadman's Mine, a few miles from here, and must get a good thing out of it, as he always has plenty of money. Do you know him?"  
"I do not remember ever to have seen him before, and there certainly seems a mystery in the behavior of three men to-night at sight of me—a mystery I am anxious to solve, and I wish to ask you if I can get a saddle-horse and guide in the morning, as I desire to go to the cabin of this Hugh Lambert, who so generously contributed my own likeness as his fee to-night?"  
"You shall have a horse, Miss Markham, and a guide can be easily found for you."  
"I thank you, Judge Wolf. Good-night, sir, and please have me an early breakfast," and Violet Markham swept from the room.  
A moment after the man called Colonel Darke entered—he had evidently been watching outside.  
"Wolf, who is that girl?" he asked, in his deep tones.  
"He was a man whose age it was hard to tell; he might be thirty, and perhaps forty-five. He was a fine-looking man, his cheeks, chin and mouth hidden by a long black beard, and his eyes deep-set, dark blue, and yet full of fire, while they were ever restless, hardly resting an instant on any face or object.  
"His form denoted strength and activity, and he wore a brown corduroy suit, and kept his coat open, as though to quickly get his hands upon the revolver upon his hip.  
"A black slouch hat shaded his forehead, and his pants were stuck in cavalry boots.  
"That is the very question she asked about you, colonel," said the judge with a smile, while he added:  
"Did you think her a ghost?"  
"She is either a woman I once knew well, or her ghost!"  
"You believe in ghosts then, colonel?"  
"No! that girl is the one I think it is, in propria

persona, though I would have sworn on the Bible she was dead."  
"Who did you think it was, colonel?"  
"That is none of your business, sir; her presence startled me because I believed her in her grave. What does she call herself here?"  
"Violet Markham."  
"Ah! What is she doing here?"  
"That is her business, Colonel Darke," quietly answered the judge.  
"You refuse to tell, then?"  
"Oh no, I really do not know more about her than she has herself told; she was robbed by that overland curse, Captain Satan and his gang, and the boys gave her a benefit, and a royal one to-night, and never did I hear a better voice than she has, and I heard Jenny Lind, years ago."  
"She was in one of the stages that arrived from Denver to-day, then?"  
"Yes; she came over in the extra, whose driver was killed and passengers robbed, she among the number."  
"Strange, very strange; her face really startled me," said the colonel, musingly.  
"And you are only the third man she has startled to-night."  
"How mean you, Wolf? You know I just came in from the Deadman's Mine."  
"Well, a young miner in the mountains, evidently one who has seen better days and is a gentleman, threw into the contribution basket as his mite, a jewel-studded miniature of Miss Markham herself, and then fled from the theater; then one of my guests, Mr. Tarleton, and whom the boys have called Dead Shot, on account of the way he laid out six of Captain Satan's band this morning, gave a loud cry and fainted in the theater, when he caught sight of the young lady; now you run for your life when you see her. You know all I can tell you, colonel, and doubtless more, too."  
"Doubtless. Now, where is this young miner?"  
"He bolted for the mountains, the boys say."  
"And this Dead Shot?"  
"He soon recovered from his swoon and came to his room and stayed awhile and just before you came in went down to the X. 10 U. S. gambling saloon, for he asked me where he could try his fortunes with the cards."  
"He is a gambler, then, judge?"  
"Doubtless, and a successful one, too, I should think."  
"I will try my luck against his. Will you go down, judge?"  
"Yes, I would like to see a game between you; he has a quantity of nerve, though he was upset by a woman's face, and you, colonel, are known as the most successful hand with the cards in Central City."  
Leaving the hotel under the colonel's assistant, Sling Rum, a Heathen Chinese, the two men wended their steps toward the X. 10 U. S. gambling-hall.

### CHAPTER V. A MYSTERIOUS THEFT.

HARDLY had Judge Wolf and Colonel Darke passed out of the hotel, when a man's form was seen in the doorway—a form trembling, and a face white and haggard.

Upon his hat and shoulders were huge snow-flakes, and yet, though he had evidently long been out in the storm, he did not tremble from cold; some deeper cause affected him.  
Upon a chair near the open fire sat Sling Rum, the Chinese, his head bent upon the table, and a kitten playing with the end of his "pig-tail," that hung within a few inches of the floor.  
As the wind howled without, the nostrils of Sling Rum played an accompaniment within doors in a deep basso that proved that the Celestial slept, and dreamt bright dreams under the influence of his favorite drug—opium.  
Noiselessly the man at the door entered the room and glided toward the desk on which lay the register. His eyes glanced over the names, and he said, half aloud:  
"Miss Violet Markham, of New York—room 33—the same room I had the week I arrived. How strange!"  
With another glance at Sling Rum he passed through the office out into the dimly-lighted hall, and noiselessly ascended the stairs until he reached the second floor.  
Here all was darkness, excepting the faint light that came from the hall below; but, as though acquainted with his surroundings, he glided forward until he came to a door at the furthest end of the passage.  
Halting, he drew a long breath, and laid his hand upon the door-knob.  
"Fool, that I should tremble so! What is she to me now? Nothing! and yet I risk life to come here and take from her that likeness which I madly threw away."  
"But I will have it, cost what it may. She was pure when that was taken—pure as the snow falling upon the mountains, and now—"  
Turning the knob and gently opened the door.  
The lamp burned brightly on the table, and before it sat Violet Markham, holding in her hand the miniature, upon which she gazed with a strange look.  
Her wealth of golden hair hung loose about her shoulders and down her back, and she wore a robe of blue and white silk that was very becoming to her.  
The man stepped into the room and closed the door softly behind him, turning the key in the lock.  
"Vivian!"  
The name fell softly from the man's lips, but it reached the ears of the maiden, who glanced quickly up, beheld that trembling form, and white, haggard face so near her; she attempted to spring to her feet, endeavored to cry out, but strength and utterance failed her, and she slipped from the chair to the floor, wholly unconscious, yet still grasping the miniature with deathlike tenacity.  
Now he seemed no longer the half-starved miner, for with giant stride he was by her side.  
Dropping upon his knees he twined his arm about her waist and drew her to his broad breast an instant; then he seemed as though about to dash her to the floor in passionate fury; but, with strange inconsistency, checking his mad intention, he covered her lips with kisses.  
Then, with a bitter curse he threw her from him, and springing to his feet began to pace the floor

with quick, angry strides, while his brow became ominously dark and scowling.  
"I am a fool; I forget she was false to me," and he gazed down upon the white face.  
"Yes, thou wert false as Lucifer, Vivian, and I almost regret that I did not slay thee, and spare him. Had I done so all these wretched years would not have been passed, for then I would have taken my own wretched life. Ha, ha! your white bosom is as still now as though the spirit had departed, and I am tempted to—no, my hand cannot strike you now, for the bullet I aimed at him also found in you a target; it lodged in your fair neck, the papers said, and left a hideous scar."  
He held the light so that its rays fell upon the neck—smooth and unmarred.  
"Good God! there is no scar! Her form, her face, ay, and her voice, and yet no scar where my cruel bullet cut its way! This is strange."  
"But I must dream, for it can be none other. The scar has healed over. Ha! she revives, and if she sees me here her cries will alarm the house. Here is what I seek," and he tore from the small hand the costly set miniature.  
Quickly he sprang to his feet, thrust the likeness into his bosom and stepped toward the door.  
There he halted and dropped his hand upon his knife-hilt, while he gritted forth:  
"She was false to me, and—no, no, no, no, I was mad then, and I will not do it now. Let her live, for living will be her punishment."  
Again he turned to the door, and the next moment glided out into the hallway, just as a wild cry burst from the lips of the woman—a cry such as Hugh Lambert had heard three years before when he shot the one he loved best in the world.  
Pausing not Hugh Lambert fled down the steps out into the keen wind and icy storm.  
But here he halted not, continuing his onward flight right out of Central City into the snow-drifts that lay upon the mountain slopes.  
The way to his lonely cabin in the hills was a difficult one by day; but now, when the storm howled through the canyons, and the winds rushed relentlessly down from the lofty mountains, driving the snow in savage gusts before it, one would deem it utterly impossible for a man to find the road, or escape perishing in the cold.  
But he struggled on with indomitable pluck, and though chilled to the very heart, kept up his rapid pace; in fact it was his only hope now to keep him from freezing to death.  
On, on, on he staggered up the mountain-side, the snow driving in his face, and his beard and hair frozen fringe; yet he faltered not, though he failed to recognize any known landmark on the way to his cabin; but then the snow would hide all traces familiar to him he thought, and in fact he thought but little of his danger; his brain was in a whirl, his heart aching at his meeting with the woman again who, three years before, had played him false.  
Suddenly there was another sound than that of the howling storm—a strange, dragging sound, half a heavy tramp, half a roll; but on Hugh Lambert pressed, unheeding, even if hearing, the strange noise.  
Then came a savage growl, a roar, and, knife in hand, Hugh Lambert was struggling for life in the



Gold Bullet Sport confronted the Angel Quartette, his gold-mounted revolvers in each hand.







tendence!" he exclaimed, clasping the doctor's hand in both of his.

"Yes," replied the doctor, "and my poor friend—how have you found him?"

"A doomed man!"

"Ah! You shock me! It is not so bad—surely, it is not so bad!"

"He cannot live twenty-four hours. If he were a younger man or had led a different life, he might rally. But not he. His nervous force has been squandered. Now he will die for want of it."

"Mon Dieu!" I cannot tell you how I feel about this. "His child—ah! I think of her!"

"She is at his bedside. She is indeed to be pitied."

"And you have told her that she will be an orphan so soon?"

"No, I dared not tell her. I thought it better to let the truth come to her by degrees, from her own observation."

"Ah! ze kindness of heart! You have my gratitude for your consideration for one whom I love as dearly as if she were already my own."

Dr. Meredith started, flushed, then turned pale. He had never thought of M. de Calignay as a possible lover of Miriam; but as he looked at him now he saw that the disparity was not greater than that often seen between man and wife.

The Frenchman was on the summer side of forty, and unquestionably a fine-looking man, physically. Why should not she love and wed him?

Dr. Meredith recalled the look and tone of M. de Calignay when the latter offered him the glass of water after Miriam's fainting-fit. What had they meant? Proprietorship? No!

The thought brought blended emotions to the doctor's heart.

First a sense of relief that Fate had taken out of his hands a question that was rapidly becoming a haunting torture to him. But it was a desperate sort of satisfaction, such as a criminal might feel on receiving sentence after a protracted trial in which suspense had become worse than certain death. And with this feeling came a dreary sense of desolation and loss.

"You wish to see your friends?" he asked, for he felt creeping over him a strong sense of aversion to the Frenchman which rendered mere physical proximity painful. He ascribed this to jealousy, and felt that it was unworthy; but it mastered him, and he knocked on the door and then opened it, so that M. de Calignay could not well prolong the conversation.

When the Frenchman had entered the room, a new feeling took possession of the doctor. He seemed to have abandoned Miriam to one who would not work her true self. So with conflicting emotions Dr. Meredith tortured himself.

Meanwhile, the Curate had welcomed M. de Calignay, his false friend, with a smile.

"Ah!" was his reflection, "this is the protector of my child. Fate sent him just as I asked the question. I will take it as a good omen. And he has been so kind to us both he cannot desert her now."

"My good friend, do I find you again stricken down? Alas! my brother, what have you done? Had you no thought of your child—our child—may I not call her so, since I love her tenderly?"

"I deserve your reproach, Calignay; and yet you are too kind to make it bitter," said the Curate. "Yes, I have been kind to her—"

"Father, I cannot bear to hear you talk like this," sobbed Miriam.

"I see it more clearly now, my child, and I cannot help reproaching myself. Hoping to gain all, I have denied you much that I should have given you. Now that all is lost, I have the bitterness of leaving you desolate and destitute."

"Not while I live, my good friend!" protested M. de Calignay, putting an arm protectively about Miriam. "When you are gone she becomes my care."

The girl rewarded him with a look of deep gratitude.

"Spoken like my generous friend!" cried the Curate, his eyes becoming humid. "Ah! Calignay, how can I repay you all I owe you! But you will believe that I meant to pay you every cent?"

"Can you speak of that at such a time?" cried M. de Calignay, apparently much hurt. "Ah! my friend, how little you have known me. Had I not loved you as I do, I would have done it all and more for Miriam's sake. But let ze past go. We must look to ze future."

"That is what pains me—to leave a young girl unprotected to the world."

"Father! Father! Father!"

And with a wild burst of grief Miriam clutched her parent's hands, throwing herself on her knees at the bedside.

All the barriers of self-control were down, swept away by the mighty flood of an uncontrollable grief. The girl shivered with dread, and sobbed and moaned in a way that would have moved the sternest heart.

Dr. Meredith knocked on the door and entered the room.

"Come!" he said, taking her gently by the wrist. "You must go and calm yourself. You shall return as soon as you have regained self-control."

"No! no! no! no!" she cried, wildly. "He will die while I am away! Oh! father! father! father!"

With gentle force Dr. Meredith and M. de Calignay clasped her fingers and bore her almost fainting from the room. She was often expressed gratitude for little services I have rendered you from time to time. Shall I be frank?—it was because you were her father. When I came ostensibly to see you, I could feast my eyes on her loveliness and grace, and listen to ze sound of her voice. My good friend, you know me—you know what I have to offer her. Not opulence, grandeur, ostentation; but a home zat will have every comfort, and enough of ze luxuries of life to make her envied by many. And she will be ze apple of my eye! Ah! my friend, give her to me! As her husband I can hedge her round about; but only as her father's friend—ah! you know ze world—my most tender care of her would be turned to poison!"

There were tears in the Curate's eyes.

"Calignay," he said, "I have not words to express my feelings. If I could see her your wife, I should know that her future was assured. But are you sure that you love her so—that it is not pity for her desolate condition?"

"My friend," interrupted the Frenchman, "her smile—ze touch of her hand is heaven to me! I have longed to speak to you of this, but I feared zat your hopes for her future would lead you to reject my suit. Now zat all is abandoned, and I can offer her a brighter future zan she can hope for without me, I am bold to say—give her to me!"

"Alas! her future is blighted! With means at my command I might have wrested for her the fortune that is hers of right; but after my death the case is hopeless. She has no prospects save those your disinterested offer opens to her, and I wish it were carried into effect already."

"While I believe zat I am not repugnant to her, I cannot hope to fill her romantic ideal, which shall have ten or a dozen years ze advantage of me," said the Frenchman. "For zis

reason she cannot have looked upon me as a lover. But she has confidence in your love and will yield to your judgment as to what is for her real well-being. If you put it as your dying wish to see us united, she cannot refuse; and she will have my care before your hold upon her relaxes."

"Calignay, it shall be so. Bring her to me. I will secure her consent, and the marriage can take place before I die."

"It will be very abrupt. Let her be surrounded by her friends. As yet Mlle. Leoline knows nothing of your misfortune. I will fetch her. It will make it easier for ze dear child. Ah! my brother, and as I am over ze irrevocable loss which I feel is impending, ze music in my soul! Am I selfish? Do I love you less?"

"No! no! Calignay. I would not have it otherwise. I am glad that my child brings you happiness. In return you will give her peace and security."

A tear fell from the Frenchman's eyes upon the Curate's hand as he pressed it to his lips. Alas! poor Miriam!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 409.)

## LET IT PASS.

Be not swift to take offense;  
Let it pass!  
Anger is a foe to sense;  
Let it pass!  
Brood not darkly o'er a wrong  
Which will disappear ere long;  
Rather sing this cheery song  
Let it pass!  
Strife corrodes the purest mind;  
Let it pass!  
Like the unguarded wind,  
Let it pass!  
And vulgar souls that live  
May condemn without reprieve;  
'Tis the noble who forgive.  
Let it pass!  
Echo not an angry word;  
Let it pass!  
Think how often you have erred;  
Let it pass!  
Since our joys must pass away  
Like the dewdrops on the spray,  
Wherefore should our sorrows stay?  
Let it pass!  
If for good you've taken ill,  
Let it pass!  
Oh! be kind and gentle still;  
Let it pass!  
Time at last makes all things straight;  
Let it pass!  
And our triumph shall be great;  
Let it pass!  
Bid your anger to depart,  
Let it pass!  
Lay these homely words to heart,  
Let it pass!  
Follow not the giddy throng;  
Better to be wronged than wrong;  
Therefore sing this cheery song—  
Let it pass!  
Let it pass!

## El Capitan;

OR,

## The Queen of the Lakes.

A Romance of the Mexican Valley.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CURATE.

It was yet but an early hour when the *baile* was brought to a close. As a rule the Mexicans given to night carousing. From the mild nature of their climate, *siempre-sereno*, most of their merry-making is done out of doors and by daylight, of which they have enough. This night, however, being "Noche Buena," the dancing ended earlier, for there was the grand supper to come, and then, at midnight, the *misa del gallo*, or "cock's mass," so called from the days when clocks were unknown, and the crowing of Chanticleer was relied on for the hour of commencing the ceremony.

Most of the outside people went home to eat the *cena* in their own houses, such as were of the immediate neighborhood returning to the midnight mass in the chapel of the hacienda. In Mexico, where every one, women as well as men, goes on horseback, and usually at a gallop, a few miles or leagues are not considered distance.

Only the invited guests of the house reentered it for the supper—enough, however, to fill the great dining room, where tables were set in every available space.

I did not enter with the first crush, but a few minutes after; delayed outside by a scene of tender parting. For Loretta and her brother were going home to their water dwelling, to return no more that night. Their way was through San Isidro, distant about half a league; thence along the acalote, which Crittenden and I had traversed going back to the city.

It was only to come to an understanding, when and where we should again meet. Then hands clasped, lips in contact, reluctant to speak *Adios*—which, however, had to be spoken—and we parted; she gliding on after the brother who had gone ahead, I turning back to join the gay throng around the supper tables.

A splendid *cena* it was, with every luxury obtainable in the Valley of Mexico, where most of the delectable dishes can be had; game in rare variety, fruits alike of the tropic and temperate zones—fresh plucked at that—with the vines of both worlds, and crystallized snow from the near and distant sierras to cool the merry party as well; they who composed it very unlike people, who in another hour would be kneeling on the hard flags of a church floor, devoutly repeating paternosters! For now they had reached the climax of the day's enjoyment, and the spirit of merriment was high. Christmas crackers going off like pistol-shots, amid sallies of wit and peals of laughter.

And yet I, who should have been gayest of the gay; I who had just received a confession—the surrender of a woman's heart, that one I most wished to have and hold—I was not happy! There was a weight upon my spirits, which neither the hilarity around, nor all the wine I was drinking, could remove.

Communing with myself, I tried to discover what was causing it, but failed. It had naught to do with the little unpleasantness between myself and the Doña Ignacia; though on her side that still remained, as I could tell by her almost studied avoidance of me, ever since our encounter in the afternoon. On mine, it was no more thought of; or, at all events, not with sufficient seriousness to account for the gloom which was now holding me in its grasp, with the tenacity of a nightmare.

And what would account for it? For a long time I could not think, nor even form a conjecture; only that it seemed, in some way or other, a foreboding of evil. At length, however, it began to take shape, and ugly that shape was. During the hour of bliss, after that sweet walk, I thought not of the circumstances preceding it, and what my partner had been saying, in the belief she saw the ruffian who insulted her. The whole incident was for the time quite out of my mind. But it came back into it now, with a vividness which I could not but feel.

This was the dark cloud hitherto below the horizon, now ominously overhead. She, my betrothed, was in danger! So believed I, too truly; for, as I to confirm me in the belief, at that very instant came a singular coincidence. As the ladies had retired to pray themselves in costume, becoming the religious ceremony about to take place, Crittenden, hitherto engaged elsewhere, made his way to where I sat, and took seat beside me, soon as on his chair saying:

to-day that you recognized as an old acquaintance!"

I was rather annoyed by the interrogatory, thinking it referred to the chinampas, and that he meant chaffing me—for which I was in no humor just then. But, as the best way would be to meet him in his own vein, I rejoined, without showing reason or motive:

"Of course I did. And if your eyes hadn't been blinded by a blaze of beauty elsewhere, you'd have seen that I not only met an old acquaintance, but danced with her."

"Oh! you're speaking of the Indian girl?"

"And who are you speaking of?" I asked, the frown which his first question had brought over my face, quick passing away from it.

"That scoundrelly greaser who gave us the slip—the boatman who left us boatless on the chinampa."

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed, with a start. "Have you seen him, Crittenden? I mean here to-day?"

"Him, or his ghost. Though if it were the ghost, it displays a better taste in dress than the embodied individual itself. The man I saw was no longer in rags, but got up regardless of expense, in a suit of blue velvet, buttoned all over, and swinging the best sort of serape over his shoulder. For all I'm quite certain 'twas our quondam boatman."

"But why didn't you lay hands on him? Or come and tell me? We have good reasons for arresting the rascal. For that matter, hanging or shooting him on the spot. What hindered you?"

"Not the want of will, I can assure you; but the lack of opportunity. At first I couldn't realize the fact of its being he; and when, after a little reflection, I felt sure of it, 'twas too late. I looked all over the ground, taking my sergeant and the bugler with me, but could see nothing more of the blue velvet. So I suppose he must have seen that I had recognized him, and given La Soledad leg-bail."

The presentiment hitherto expressing me was a presentiment no more. It had changed to keen, active apprehension. If it was the *pelado* Crittenden saw, and he seemed quite sure of it, then El Guapo must have been there also, for I had long since come to the conclusion that the two scoundrels were coadjutors—both salteadores belonging to the same band.

"The brother of La Chinampas, Bella! Had she got safe home?"

A cold shiver ran through me, as in quick succession I asked these questions of myself. But a second, and yet stranger, coincidence was coming, and near at hand. As I was telling Crittenden what had occurred about the other suspicious character—whom he but knew by repute—a noise in the court-yard outside interrupted our dialogue. There were several voices speaking excitedly; then the dining-room door was pushed open, and an Indian youth rushed into the room, panting as if pursued!

"The brother of La Chinampas, Bella! I heard several exclamations, as I sprung to my feet, and advanced to meet him.

"What is it?" I asked.

A question almost superfluous, for I anticipated the answer. He gave it gaspingly:

"My sister! She's carried off! *Dios de mi alma!*"

### CHAPTER XXV.

WHICH WAY?

"Your sister carried off! By whom?"

Another question equally superfluous. I could have named the men, or if not could have described them.

"Robbers," returned the youth; "salteadores, I know, for they had horses and arms. Several there were, and, Señor capitán," he continued, recognizing me, "one of them knew yourself—the Red Hat; he that came after us on the canal!"

I stayed to hear no more, but rushing out of the room, Crittenden with me, called out for the bugler, shouting at the highest pitch of my voice, "Quickly! he did not go to bed, but he was waiting for two men, and he was waiting around the *cocina*, doing a little flirtation with the damsel of that quarter on their own account."

"Boots and saddles, bugler! Be quick!"

The men looked amazed, less from the unexpectedness of the order, so excited. But all rushed for the stables, he of the trumpet soon letting us hear its tone, the "Boots and saddles" ringing clear around the walls of the hacienda.

While the horses were being caparisoned, I found time to question the young Indian, drawing from him all the information he was able to give. He and his sister had passed San Isidro, and were getting into their skill—which they had left at a landing in the acalote beyond; he was already in, the girl just stepping over the top of the bushes, laid hold of and dragged her back. Then, raising her in their arms, they bore her off between them.

"She struggled and cried out!"

"She struggled, señor; but only one cry. She could not say more; the salteadores threw a serape over her head—that hindered her voice."

"And what did you do?"

"I shouted loud as I could, señor. Then I jumped out of the boat and ran after them. But before I could get up they were joined by a great many others, all on horseback, and they had two horses with only the saddle and the reins. On one of them they set my sister—*pobrecita!* Then he who had her in his arms mounted behind, and they all galloped off."

"But how did you know one of them was the Red Hat?"

"Because I saw his face, señor. I was close up before they got quite away, and the moon was on it. He wasn't either of the two that first took her off, but one of the others who met them. He was leading all, and giving directions. Oh, yes! I'm sure it was he, señor; I've seen him before, and I can swear to it. He thought he was near his night when they were dancing. She was just telling me about it as we were going back to our boat, and it made us afraid. Gone away with that man! *Academi!* What will he do to her!"

The distress seemed great, but it was nothing to mine. His speech was driving me mad, and it relieved me to hear the tramping of hoofs on the pavement outside, with the clink of steel scabbards. The men of my escort were ready for the road.

In a trice we were in our saddles. Crittenden of course longed to go, and so did I. The Mexican officer would not stay behind; instead, seemed rather pleased at being called upon once more to do duty. An ardent soldier, he had felt it irksome to have his sword so long rusting in the sheath. Something more than his sword I wanted now—his guidance; for without that our pursuit would have been but a game of blind man's bluff.

And he was just the right man in the right place. He had acquaintance with every road and road in the valley of Mexico, and the mountains which he struck the shafts breaking in the air, he knew all about El Guapo, and where that gay Lothario made his home when playing the rôle of robber—a knowledge he had late gained from Colonel Espinosa. And just that I now wanted to possess, for I had determined on tracking the abductor to his den, if I could.

In our saddles the question came up, "Which way?" of course asked of Moreno. It required him to reflect before answering it. San Isidro was near the lake's edge; La Soledad being between this and the Great National Road, by which we had traveled part way, came to the hacienda. Espinosa said that the robber had his head-quarters somewhere near the Pyramids of San Juan de Teotihuacan. The direct route to this last place from San Isidro was by La Soledad. But there was another road which could be taken; roundabout, by reason of an isolated cerro—one of the little volcanoes spoken of—which diverted it, so increasing the distance by miles.

With such spoil as he had just captured, the bandit would make back for his lair—we felt sure of that. Our uncertainty was as to which of the two roads he had taken. But we were

not long in doubt. As it chanced one of my escort was an old plainsman of course a skilled tracker; and, soon as we had ridden out to the road leading past the hacienda, at some three or four hundred yards' distance from it, I directed him to dismount, and examine the tracks.

Flinging himself out of his saddle, he stooped down and commenced scrutinizing the ground. Luckily there was moonlight in his favor, which made it easier.

"Plenty o' horse-tracks hyar, cap'n; but all goin' tort the Vera Cruz road. It's the people as hev been to the gatharin'!"

"Go back a little the other way, toward the lake. See what's there."

He did as directed, walking off a score of yards or so beyond the gate of the hacienda avenue; then bent his body, with eyes to the ground as before.

"Well, any gone that way?"

"Yes, cap'n, a dozen or tharabout; but only two as seen a' all fresh. The rest must 'a' passed along afore sun-up o' this mornin'."

"Do you see any from the lake—coming this way?"

"Neery one; all hev goed tort it."

"Back to your saddle!"

"That's to our advantage," observed the Mexican officer, as we turned our horses' heads toward the Vera Cruz road. "To make San Juan of the Pyramids, they must cross the *Camino Nacional*, at the village of Los Reyes. We strike it at Tapisahuia, and then on to Los Reyes. It's a good twenty minutes' ride of time in our favor; and if we make good speed we may yet overtake and perhaps intercept them, before—"

"Forward! Full gallop!" I shouted out, without waiting for him to finish; and forward went we, fast as spurs could make our horses go. The moonlight gave us good opportunity, making the white, dusty track conspicuous, so that there was no need to draw bridle for an instant. And we drew it not, till we had reached the main road for Mexico. Nor even then, for turning toward the city, we dashed through Tapisahuia at charging speed, and out of our horses' hoofs waking up the people of the place, who had long before gone to bed.

In the same way we rode through Los Reyes, but not to arouse the sleepers there. Their slumbers had been already disturbed by the stamping of a troop of cavalry, and preceded us, and as we galloped between the two rows of *adobe* dwellings, we could here and there see faces in the windows, with eyes looking out, half-curious, half-frightened.

About a mile beyond Los Reyes—going cityward, as we were—lay the town of Tezococo, which is the same for San Juan de Teotihuacan, turns abruptly to the right, thence trending northward along the edge of the great salt lake—Tezococo itself. We did not yet know whether the party we were in pursuit of was made of us or not, and were making for the junction of the two roads to get this assurance.

But we got it before reaching that point. As we passed out of the little *pueblita*, the old plainsman, who was riding by my side, a length or two ahead of the others, looking down upon the dusty road, said quietly:

"Fresh tracks hyar, cap'n. Ten or a dozen hosses hev jest been rid'ng this road; goin' at a consid'able smart pace, too."

Scarce had he finished speaking, when the truth of his words was confirmed, and by ocular evidence. As we were about to enter the angle of the road—which would bring us clear of some bushes, hitherto hindering our view—we saw a dark clump in the middle of the causeway, less than a half-mile ahead, and moving, as could be told by some metallic points that sparkled in the moonlight.

"The salteadores, *por cierto!*" muttered Moreno, as he spurred up by my side. "See! they're leaving the main road—turning off for Tezococo."

This was true; the black mass hitherto of small dimensions had commenced lengthening out, in *chicla* to the right, and kept on till we counted six complete files. For the robbers were marching in formation "by twos." Evidently they had not yet seen us; for they were going at a walk, as if they had no fear or thought of being pursued. They could not well have heard us; since for a mile or more back the causeway was thickly covered with dust, which had deadened the hoof-strokes of our horses.

Soon as sighting them, I had drawn up, giving back the command "Halt!" in a half-whisper. I only stopped to take their measure, and determine the best course of action. There they were now, full before our eyes, as they advanced along the right-hand road, lances at rest, the blades of which we could see gleaming and glistering. In all about a dozen of them, not so many as of ourselves. But had there been ten times the number I should have continued the pursuit, and I knew there was not a man at my back who would have failed to follow me.

Our halt was but for a few seconds, the Mexican officer saying:

"Now's our time to get up with them. They're on a road where, for the next three leagues, there isn't break or bush a rat could hide itself in."

"Full gallop again!" I called back to the escort; and at that gait we again went on.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUDES WITH A CHRISTMAS SUPPER.

We made no attempt further to conceal ourselves from the party pursued. In the bright moonlight that was plainly impossible; and soon as we had cleared the scrub, they saw us. We were in a very agony of suspense, for the gallop, in a bad scare, as was evident by the tone of their ejaculations, which we could distinctly hear.

We stayed not to look or listen, but rode earnestly on; soon ourselves turning into the Tezococo road, where we had them right in front of us.

Henceforth it would be a simple question of speed between horses and horses; but I had no doubt about the result. The men of our escort were the pick of my troop, all splendidly mounted; and as they struck the shafts breaking in the air, he had fallen to us to make trial of the American horse against the Mexican mustang. We had chased both salteadores and guerrilleros before, and knew that the little native steed, although game, and bottom to the backbone, is no match in heels for his larger and longer-striding competitor. But if not doubting our ability to overtake the horseman pursued, I had fears of something that might occur when they were overtaken. I had heard of these Mexican highwaymen, when brought to bay, and under the belief death was to be dealt out to them, refusing to surrender, dying desperately, but first killing their captives! More than once had I seen recorded, the case of a beautiful girl having a *machete* thrust through her, just as father, brother, or lover had reached the spot, and been upon the point of effecting her rescue! What if such should be the fate of her—my betrothed!

I was in a very agony of suspense, for the men of our escort, urged the animals on. They were at their best speed, breathing hard, as they pressed forward, tossing the foam from their lips in flakes that came clouting back in our faces. We in the saddles silent all—not a word now passing our lips—no sound save the clattering of hoofs—and the clinking of empty scabbards—our sabers now drawn.

Soon the half-mile of white track—that stretched between us and them, was shortened to a quarter, and rapidly getting less. Another dash would do it.

"Cut every one down who resists!" I shouted back to my men. "But be careful you don't harm the girl; for heaven's sake—for mine!"

I think most of them understood the nature of the appeal, which, far as they could, I knew would insure her safety. Whether or not, they

were the last words spoken till the muzzles of our horses were almost touching the tails of the rearmost mustangs. Then other words were uttered, but not on our side. They came from the bandits. No warlike shout, nor battle-cry to begin the conflict. Instead, the cowardly exclamation:

"*Nos rendamos!*" (We surrender!)

Never were men more astonished than we at hearing it, at the same time seeing the robbers, who had reined up, fling their lances down upon the road, piteously appealing to us to spare their lives!

Only two offered resistance, as we first dashed in among them; these in obedience to the order I had given—too late to be recalled—being instantly sabered in their saddles, out of which they dropped dead.

Fortunately, the man who carried the captive was not one of them. Seeing that I commanded, he came riding up to me—the girl on the saddle before him, with the serape still over her head, and corded around her arms.

"Señor General!" he said, "I deliver up my charge to you, and glad I am to get rid of it. Caramba! I should never have undertaken such an uncongenial duty but for our chief, who would have killed me had I disobeyed him. *Eh bien!*" he added, turning his eyes upon one of the two who had been sabered; "that's something to be thankful for. El Guapo will give me no more of his disagreeable orders."

I heard the words, but without heeding or thinking of them; my thoughts being occupied, as my arms, in releasing the captive from her uncomfortable situation. The bandit lent his aid with every demonstration of alacrity. When the muffling was at length removed from her head, and the moonbeams fell upon her face, I gazed at it, first anxiously, then with joy unspeakable. Her long black hair, which she had disheveled; the face it shadowed pale; but the eyes were bright and beautiful as ever—radiant of life as of light—giving me the assurance that no harm had happened her.

A wild glance, wondering and interrogative, quick followed by one of recognition, and she flung herself on my breast.

"Tis you, *amante mio!* Saved! I am saved!"

"Yes, *Lorita querida!* And you need never more fear the man who meant you harm. He is there."

I pointed to the dead body of the bandit, lying near with face upturned the other light. A handsome face it was, even with the angry scowl, which must have been on it as he breathed his last.

She gave it but a glance, then shuddering and clinging close to me, cried out:

"Take me away! Oh, take me away!"

I was leading her off the ground, when Crittenden and Captain Moreno came up—the latter with a peculiar expression on his face. After congratulating the chinampas on her escape, he turned to me with a laugh, saying:

"Cavallero! I owe you a supper for six; which debt I shall be most happy to discharge on to-morrow, Christmas night, at the *Fonda de Espiritu Santo*—if that will suit your convenience."

I stared at the man in astonishment, wondering what in the world he could mean. Such a proposal at such time and place!

"I do not comprehend you, Captain Moreno."







## THE SONG OF DEATH.

BY WM. W. LONG.

Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither in the North wind's breath;  
And stars to set; but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh, Death!

—HEMANS.

I am the Reaper King of earth!  
They crowned me long ago,  
When the world was new and young,  
With its first and wildest woe.  
I stand at the bridal hour,  
And at the marriage bed;  
I march o'er the earth in power and might—  
Who will resist my tread?

Where the soldier his watch is keeping,  
In the lone hours of the night,  
And the maid in woe is weeping,  
I have silenced both in my might.  
I have stood in the halls of pleasure,  
When the fated bowl went round,  
But ere the morning star came forth,  
Their mirth in woe was crowned.

Man hath shaken the earth with power,  
And won a wreath of fame,  
But I laid my hand upon his brow,  
And now where is his name?  
Love sat beneath the vine and bower,  
With Beauty as I passed;  
I smiled upon them in my might,  
And they sunk to earth's chill breast.

I have heard the wild winds blowing,  
Thro' the fields and woods away;  
I have seen earth's children weeping,  
As I strode along my way.  
Where in my birth I came from,  
No one on earth can say;  
Where my feet tread the grassy press,  
Mortals shudder—turn away.

## How They Went Home.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

MARIAN FIELD stopped a moment at Burnham and Burnham's window and her lovely blue eyes looked all the admiration she felt at sight of the tempting display of velvets and silks, laces and ribbons, satins and all the hundred and one accessories of a lady's toilet. All the admiration, and a little—just a little purely feminine envy, and then she turned her face away, to the quiet, plain, elderly lady who had stopped a moment, waiting for her.

"Oh, Annie, how exquisite everything is! I wonder if it is awfully wicked in me to wish we were rich, and to hate Meredith Alwyn because we are not! Let's hurry away, before I become perfectly savage."

Her sweet, girlish laugh rippled out on the quiet evening air—a laugh that had just a tinge of bitterness mixed with its silver sweetness, and a gentleman who was accidentally passing at the moment, looked to see Marian's lovely face, with her blue eyes, and fair complexion, to which the crisp December air had lent a delicate pink tinge, and bright golden hair that was lightly fluffy over her forehead, and looking coquettishly becoming as it escaped from the pale-blue zephyr hood she wore. It was just the merest passing glance he had, but enough to show him the surpassing loveliness of Marian, and the quiet well-bredness of both Marian and her sister.

And then as they passed further away into the dusk of the night, he went into a quiet little drug store, next Burnham and Burnham's, brilliantly illuminated show-windows—interested in inquiring of the pleasant-faced lad, who, standing at the door had heard and seen the ladies.

The lad went briskly around to his post behind the counter at his customer's entrance.

"I want some postage-stamps and cigars, my boy—I believe that was what I wanted, at least, until the sight of that lovely girl that just now passed drove it from my head. Who were they, do you know? I'll take a half dozen of those Reina Victorias—yes."

The drug clerk promptly selected the choicest cigars, talking pleasantly the while.

"You must mean Miss Field and Miss Marian; they just went by. Miss Marian is called the prettiest girl hereabouts. I think so."

The gentleman smiled at the young fellow's enthusiasm.

"I quite agree with you; I think I never saw a more perfect face. Field—I think I've heard the name before. How great is the extent of my bill, please?"

"A dollar, just. And there's such a romance connected with them," the clerk went on, dealing out the change for the five, his godsend of a customer had laid on the show-case.

"A romance? Indeed! Ah, yes, thank you, I will take a light. But the romance?"

"Why, to-day they are as poor as—oh, so poor they have to earn their own living, while six months ago they were the heiresses to the Deaconwoode estate—perhaps you know where that is? Unless you are a stranger."

"I certainly am a total stranger, but I have heard of the great Deaconwoode estate; it's worth a million dollars, more or less, I've been told. And those ladies were the heiresses?"

"Yes, sir—from the time when they were born and brought up on the place—and not until all of a sudden, was it discovered that there was somebody who had a better claim on it than they—a first nephew to old Mr. Field, and these young ladies were second nieces—and so, the lawyers made a row about it, and Miss Field and Miss Marian walked out as patient and proud and smiling as ever, and took up their quarters down-town, and earn their little salary that wouldn't buy the toilet-water they used to order here, of a year."

"Quite a remarkable experience for two young ladies, and you have told it well. It really is a pity—yes, thanks, one, two, four—all right. A fine night!" And Mr. Meredith Alwyn nodded to his diffident young friend, and took himself slowly, thoughtfully up the street, that led directly to the magnificent estate of Deaconwoode.

"Beggars—those splendid women—that lovely-voiced, sapphire-eyed girl, fit to sit on the grandest throne under heaven! Beggars—through my acceptance of uncle Cyril Field's legacy! Why didn't somebody tell me the atrocity of such wholesale rascality? Is it fate, I wonder, that threw them directly in my path, almost the hour of my arrival in this strange place whither I had come to see my new accession! And how shall I see them again?"

"Will we do it? Why Annie, of course we will do it! It would be a direct flying in the face of Providence to refuse such a godsend. It won't be any trouble for dear old Elsie to cook for one more, and that big empty room that looks out on the chimneys of Deaconwoode—we will never use that room, Annie. And only think—twelve dollars a week! It will tide us through the winter so comfortably."

Marian Field's eyes were shining like blue stars, as she talked eagerly and rapidly to her said elderly sister, sitting in the sunny east window, tying the threads of the threads of the silk handkerchief, she had finished hemming—an immense pile, shimmering like fragments of rainbows against her dark dress.

"But—dear—the idea of our having—a boarder—and—a gentleman boarder at that! If it was a lady, now—"

Marian laughed.

"You dear, proud old darling! Why shouldn't we have a gentleman boarder as well as anybody else—and just the handsomest man you ever saw, Annie! And, *entre nous*, *ma sœur*, if it was a lady who had applied to us, I wouldn't think of it—such fussing, criticising creatures as we are. But, give a man plenty of good things to eat, and if he pays twelve dollars he is entitled to the very best of the market, and Elsie's specimens of Deaconwoode cooking, and a cosy, warm, well-lighted place to enjoy his slippers and cigars, and it is all he wants to make him a happy animal."

Miss Field smiled, amused in spite of herself, yet there was a reluctant look in her eyes as she looked in Marian's bright, hopeful face.

"You must do as you think best, dear. I dare say it will be all right."

And so it came to pass that Mr. Meredith Alwyn took possession of the room in the Field sisters' cottage, that looked out on the chimneys and turrets and towers of Deaconwoode—took possession as their twelve dollar a week boarder, and gave his name as Curtis, and in course of time very naturally came to be on the most excellent terms with them, until one day, Miss Field, in a particularly confidential mood, told him all about the romance of their lives; how, until so lately, they had lived their life of elegance and ease at Deaconwoode, and how the prospect of their future had faded as completely and suddenly as a beautiful dream.

"Whoever this usurping heir is, he must be a double-dyed rascal—selfish to the heart's core—to have defrauded you so."

Mr. Curtis seemed remarkably emphatic in his denunciations.

"Oh, I would not like to think that," Miss Field said, in her gentle, womanly way, "because he certainly had a right to it, and I dare say he was delighted at his good fortune, and surely he ought to enjoy it."

"I don't know about that, Miss Field. I think it simply inhuman for any man to turn two delicately bred women out of their home of elegance and ease, as this villain has turned you out. Perhaps he did not know, but he should have been told, and he certainly should at least have divided."

Miss Field smiled.

"But people don't often be so generous, Mr. Curtis. Yes, for Marian's sake, it would be pleasant; but I don't know. The discipline of adversity and the necessity for effort are making a grand woman of her, while I must confess I rather shrink in distaste."

An hour or so later he and Marian went out for a little stroll—they had fallen into that habit lately.

A Fair Face;  
OR,  
GUY FENTON'S ESPIONAGE.

BY ELEANOR BLAINE.

## CHAPTER I.

GUY FENTON.

A BRIGHT, clear, sunny afternoon melting into twilight—that was the time; and the scene was Albemarle Villa, half-hidden by tall, clustering beeches.

Two ladies standing at a window, waiting for an expected guest.

Guy Fenton arrived late, just before dinner; and after hastily changing his dress he entered the drawing-room where Mr. Arnsdale, the owner, stood, awaiting his appearance.

"Very glad to see you, Guy," he said, advancing with a smile. "Very glad you've come up to this dreary place again."

"Thanks, uncle; there's nothing gives me more pleasure than to throw aside my law-briefs, and take a trip to quiet little Albemarle."

"You look a little worn out, Guy. Is business brisk?"

"Well, yes; just now our court calendar is pretty well crowded."

"Here are the ladies."

The door opened and Laura Arnsdale and Miss Evelyn, her governess, came in.

Guy Fenton turned around from the window. His glance fell upon the governess. He saw a plain dress, but a wonderfully beautiful girl, and he made way for her as for a princess.

There is an impulse, not of admiration simply, but of respect in our first sight of a beautiful woman; because we intuitively reverence

"From some of your acquaintances, I suppose."

"No, some people that live in Madison Avenue, I think. They were out of town at the time, and I didn't take the trouble to hunt them up."

"She's quite young—not much older than Laura, I should say."

"Yes. She's more of a companion than an instructress to Laura."

Finishing his wine and leaving his uncle to enjoy a quiet nap, Guy Fenton went out to smoke his cigar and take a look about the place, for he had not been at Albemarle for the space of five months.

The low evening sun shone up from the western horizon, and flooded the air with splendor. From glittering ivy, from thickets, from the discolored foliage of lofty boughs, the birds sang out their vesper lays and glorified the coming hour of rest.

Guy Fenton was a man of refined taste and endowed with a sense of the beautiful, and these scenes, enchanted by the twilight hour, thrilled him.

"How can they call this place dreary?" he said, looking down at the river whose surface was unruined and reflected every object near, like a polished mirror. "If I only possessed such a home and had such a woman for a—"

The rest of this sentence was cut short by the appearance of Laura and Isabelle Evelyn, who came out of a little summer-house near by.

"Oh, here is Guy," exclaimed Laura. "Come, sir, you were going to play truant and we want you for our boatman this evening. We want to sail, do we not, Belle?"

Miss Evelyn smiled an assent.

"I am at your service with pleasure," replied Guy, throwing away the end of his cigar.

"A beautiful evening, Miss Evelyn."

"Quite charming for a ride on the river," she murmured, in a low, musical tone.



Isabelle.

power of every kind, and beauty in a woman is power. The momentary scene was fixed in his mind forever. He had cause, afterward, to remember how that figure and face appeared to him, for the first time, in the shadow of that quaint little drawing-room.

"Miss Evelyn, cousin Guy," said Laura.

Guy Fenton approached, smiling, and took her hand deferentially, and told her that he had heard a great deal about Miss Evelyn from his cousin, and was very happy to make her acquaintance.

Isabelle Evelyn liked his manner very much; she felt that she was treated like a person of consequence, and as one worth pleasing.

A tall, graceful man of twenty-six or seven years of age. His face decidedly handsome with its dark blue eyes and classic modeling. His hair chestnut and curling in loose tendrils brushed carelessly back from a broad, high forehead. And pervading his features a winning charm of expression, a subtle fascination.

Such was Miss Evelyn's mental description of Guy Fenton as she and Laura strolled along the lawn after dinner, while Mr. Arnsdale and his nephew sat sipping their wine.

"Miss Evelyn is rather a pretty girl, uncle," said Guy, leaning back in his chair, and holding up his glass, filled with choice old sherry, so that the light might shine through it.

"Miss Evelyn?" repeated Mr. Arnsdale. "Oh! yes; very well, very pretty indeed."

"She has a superior education, too, I should say," added Guy, still gazing idly at the wine.

"Yes, yes, her manner shows it—quite a wonderful creature, indeed!"

Mr. Arnsdale's solitude at Albemarle Villa had given him careless habits of soliloquizing, and as Guy glanced sharply into his eyes he would have given something to have recalled his last words.

"Where did you say she came from, uncle?"

"I advertised for a governess—you know Laura was very lonely last April after her mother died—and Miss Evelyn answered the advertisement. She came from the city, quite highly recommended."

Guy Fenton was a practiced oarsman, and he moved Mr. Arnsdale's pretty wherry over the rippling surface with perfect ease, while the young ladies sat, in the stern, on the padded seats, and watched the long, regular strokes. After pulling down the river some distance Guy drew in the oars and allowed the boat to drift back with the tide, only, now and then moving the rudder to keep it in its course.

The three people chatted very pleasantly together and it was not long before Guy Fenton and Miss Evelyn seemed as much at home in each other's society as if, indeed, they had been old acquaintances.

Miss Isabelle Evelyn could converse upon most any topic Guy chose to mention. She had traveled in Europe, and had spent two years in Paris completing her education. So when he spoke of the masterpieces at the Louvre he found her perfectly familiar with them; and in fact there was hardly any celebrated place or noted thing she had not visited and seen. In music she was quite an enthusiast, and in literature Guy found her intelligence always on a level with his own.

Poor Laura, who knew very little about these subjects, and who was quite ignorant concerning whatever part of the world there might be beyond the limits of her father's estate, remained silent and listened.

She was astonished, and, perhaps, a little piqued, yet she did not show it, at the wisdom of her governess. She began to feel uneasy and to wish they were ashore. Somehow or other, as she leaned over the boat's side and looked into the calm and silent water, a cruel and tantalizing thought stole into her brain: "What if Guy should be bewitched by Isabelle Evelyn's beautiful face?"

"Miss Evelyn is a beautiful woman—a priceless pearl," thought Guy, "yet I am sure I can't quite understand her."

## CHAPTER II.

SENT OUT WITH THE TIDE.

LEAVING these young people for a while, we will go back to a few nights previous to the

opening of this story, and make acquaintance with one of our characters, as he sits in a boat floating in the East river, off the Battery.

There was a drizzling rain, and it was so dark that no object could be seen twenty feet ahead.

The man sat quietly in the stern, directing the course of the boat with an oar, as the tide impelled it along. Now and then the shadowy bulk of some vessel with its ghostly sails would start up very near him, pass on and vanish. The sound of steam-paddles, the clinking of iron chains, the creaking of blocks, the measured working of oars, and the occasional violent barking of some passing dog on shipboard would come to his listening.

Approaching the channel, near Governor's Island, where the current sets out strong toward the sea, he pulled in the oar and, bending over, lifted with all his strength the body of a man from the bottom of the boat onto the gunwale. There was an indentation over the insensible man's left temple out of which the blood was oozing and trickling down his face.

The man paused for a moment as if to recover his breath, and then again leaning over he carefully examined the face before him.

"It must be he!" he muttered; "I can't have made a mistake—though the face looks a little too old for his."

With these words he let the body slide noiselessly over the side into the water. The ripples passed over the sightless face for a moment, dreadfully like faint changes of expression—then it sank out of sight.

This tide will take him through the Narrows before morning, sure," soliloquized the man; and dropping onto the seat he took up a pair of sculls and rowed up the river.

The rain was falling fast and the clocks of the city were striking three as this man, muffled in a heavy coat, with a slouched hat pulled over his face, hurried up the front steps of a mysterious-looking house in Prince street and gave the door a loud rap with his knuckles.

After some minutes the turning of a key sounded in the lock and the door was partly opened by a negro, who looked cautiously at the man before allowing him to enter.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said the black.

"Yes, of course it is; why do you keep me standing here in the rain until daylight?" and he pushed by the negro and entered the hall.

"The missus been waiting for you this ere long time, Master Jem."

"Where is she?"

"In the back room."

"Is there any one in the saloon, up-stairs?"

"Yes."

The man, going to the further end of the hall, opened a door and a flood of light streamed over him, which, coming so suddenly from the outer darkness, caused him to shade his eyes with his hand until they should become accustomed to the change.

The apartment that he now entered was of medium size and luxuriously furnished. A fire burned in the grate, near which sat a woman rather inclined to be stout and advanced beyond the prime of life.

She looked around when the man closed the door behind him.

"Well?" she asked.

"It's done!" he replied, sullenly, throwing himself into a chair opposite her.

"For certain?"

"Yes, for certain."

"How?"

"Curse it," he snarled, looking at her savagely, "it's done! Ain't that enough?"

"No. Tell me, Jem Lash, how it was done?" she exclaimed, raising her voice in an angry tone.

"Drowned!"

"Drowned?"

"Yes; and sent out to sea with the ebb-tide."

The woman's curiosity seemed to be satisfied with this for she bent her head forward, so as to rest upon her hands, and stared meditatively at the fire.

These two persons formed a strange couple. The relation between them was neither a son and mother, nor a daughter and father. Madam Devant, or Old Mother Lash, as she was sometimes called, had a pale, sallow face and greenish gray eyes, which, at times, gave a very fiendish expression to her countenance.

Her son resembled her very much, and as he sat in the luxurious chair with the firelight playing over his features, a reader of faces could have easily imagined him capable of any villainy.

The mother and this son kept a gambling-saloon in this house in Prince street, which, at the time we write of, was a popular resort for sporting men and "young bloods" about town. In this house many a fortune had been lost, and many a dark deed done which never had been whispered to the public.

New York city is a strange place, and strange things happen in it every day in the week.

Whatever crime had been committed on this dark and rainy night by Madam Devant and her son remains to be developed.

## CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERIOUS LETTER.

WHEN Guy and the ladies reached the boat-house, Mr. Arnsdale was there and joined them in the walk toward the house.

The moon was now up and the night was brilliant.

"Four abreast is a little too much for this path, isn't it?" said Mr. Arnsdale. "You shall lead, Guy—you and Laura," and he and Miss Evelyn fell a little behind.

Archibald Arnsdale strode on beside Miss Evelyn in silence; a topic somehow did not turn up at once. He saw from the corners of his eyes her elegant figure moving beside him, and a little space between; he saw her features, too, clearly enough in the moonlight, and that she was looking straight before her, rather downward, as she walked, and very gravely.

"I want to speak to you, Miss Evelyn, upon a little business," he said at length, glancing ahead to satisfy himself that they could not be overheard by his daughter and nephew.

Miss Evelyn threw upon him a grave look of inquiry.

"Yes, a little business," he repeated.

"Very well, sir."

"Now, really, I wish you would leave off sir-ing me," he urged, in a low tone, "unless you want to vex me."

There was no remark.

"I sometimes think, Miss Evelyn, you are a little haughty."

"Haughty!—really?" replied she.

"Yes, haughty," he repeated.

"Why?"

"Because you keep me so at arm's-length. All very well, of course, if I were a young man; but I'm not—I'm an old one."

"I'm very sorry. I hope I'm not haughty, sir," she said, in a contrite way that was very pretty.

"There! sir again!"

"You were speaking about some business, Mr. Arnsdale, I think?"

"Yes, so I was. I want to know—you'll really do me an essential kindness if you will—will you consent to help me a little with my letters, my accounts—in short, be my secretary?"

An enigmatic smile passed over the features of Miss Isabelle Evelyn at this proposal.

"I should be very happy to assist you, Mr. Arnsdale, but I think you would find me incapable."

"But you can write a very clever letter, and—I never pay compliments—I'm quite past that time of life—"

"I will try, if—if you will promise to have patience with me, and not be displeased."

"Displeased—I? quite the contrary. There, you need not look puzzled. I thank you very much."

And with these words, drawing near to her side, he took her hand and pressed it.

"Then it is agreed, isn't it?" he said, in a low key.

She laughed a little, and said "Yes"; and he thought she blushed as she laughed. Yes, she did blush; he was sure she blushed a little.

While this little talk was going on Guy and



Laura had wandered some distance ahead, paying no attention whatever to those behind him. "You haven't said yet that you were glad to see me, Laura," said Guy.

"But you know I am glad, Guy."

"It is very well for you to say so, if you didn't laugh when you say it."

"Was I laughing?" and the pretty girl leaned lightly on his arm. "I wasn't conscious of it."

"It's very odd, when pleasure you take—I don't mean you, in particular, but all of you—in bewilderment and merriment, I never know when you're in earnest. You're so awfully sincere, and take such delight in it."

"If one's known to be sincere, one's incapable of deceiving any more, and nobody has any right to complain, don't you see?" urged Laura, ingeniously.

Guy laughed, and acknowledged himself beaten.

Mr. Arnsdale and Miss Evelyn now joined them again and then the party of four broke up.

Miss Isabelle Evelyn, going to her room and locking the door, sat down before her glass, thinking and looking all the time at her reflection. She liked looking at herself in the glass. She knew that she was beautiful; and that her beauty was her power.

She took a letter from her pocket which she had that evening received. It was open; she moved her bedroom candle near, she read it over again in an anxious way and her cheeks grew a shade paler than usual.

Twice she read it, and a strange, wild look stole over her features. Then she thought proudly, then for the third time read the letter through, and turned round the back of the envelope, and looked at that, and so at last held it up to the light and burned it to ashes.

She sat on the side of her bed for a long time and fell into a deep meditation, and did not recollect herself until the chill recalled her.

So, with a little shudder, up she stood, shook her beautiful dark tresses round her shoulders, and gathered them into a few great folds, and extinguishing the light, laid down to await the coming of sleep. But her head was full of all sorts of weird fancies. There was something in that letter which kept running in her mind and would not permit her to close her eyes. It was the words, "Drowned, and sent out with the tide."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A BAD DREAM.

A WEEK elapsed and Guy Fenton still remained at Albemarle Villa. When he left his office in New York he had promised to come back in a few days, but now business for a time was forgotten, and his only thoughts were of Isabelle Evelyn. Her presence to him was sunshine, and her absence gloom.

He, however, took great pains not to let his office discover the state of his feelings toward the governess by the slightest look or word. Because he had two reasons for keeping his passion concealed. In the first place he was not certain that Miss Evelyn entertained any other feeling for him than respect; and in the second place he knew that his uncle had always desired that he should some day become Laura's husband.

One evening while Guy Fenton and Miss Evelyn were standing alone in the drawing-room, near one of the windows, conversing in a low tone, Mr. Arnsdale—whom they thought to be more than a mile away—entered unperceived.

He beheld them with a shock. Guy was holding Isabelle Evelyn's hand in his, and she was looking down, her cheeks dyed with a brilliant blush.

But a moment passed before they saw him, and Miss Evelyn glided through the window that opened upon the veranda in front.

Archibald Arnsdale stood stock-still in the doorway, a terrible expression upon his face.

Guy eyed him with a strange stare, but was quite himself before his uncle had half-recovered.

"I thought I heard your voice, uncle, and I wasn't wrong—just the moment coming up the path," said he, gayly. "Miss Evelyn came in to inquire for you. She wanted to know something about your letter, some instructions. She's your secretary, isn't she?"

"My letters—yes, she writes them sometimes. You both thought, of course, that I was still away," said Mr. Arnsdale, fixing his eyes upon his nephew and speaking in a measured way.

"I really had not been thinking of conjectures on the subject," Guy replied, coldly.

Mr. Arnsdale said nothing more; he was aware that he had said something very foolish. He turned round and went into the library, at the opposite side of the hall.

On the middle of the floor of this room he stood for some time with downcast eyes and darkened face, not exactly thinking, but rather stumped, and with the elements of fury indistinctly rolling in his breast.

He walked to the window and looked out, without an object. A pleasant female laugh came to his ear, and he saw Miss Isabelle Evelyn talking with Laura on the lawn a little distance away.

"I'm a fool!" he muttered, throwing himself into a chair, "that girl is deceitful; she has only been amusing herself at my expense."

As we have said, Mr. Arnsdale was a proud, vindictive man, and this little scene in the drawing-room had stung his pride to the quick. In truth, he regarded Isabelle Evelyn as his future wife, and, perhaps, he had a right to believe that she really loved him. He was now undergoing the agonies of jealousy. Moreover he felt mortified to think that, perhaps, his nephew had been deceived by her.

While in this mood Archibald Arnsdale's eyes happened to fall upon the portrait of his dead wife which hung on the wall directly before him.

For a moment he looked at it blankly, and then he shuddered. He imagined there was a look of reproach in that sad, sweet face gazing at him steadily as if it would start from the canvas.

Nineteen years ago—he remembered it very well—he had married a girl, a sweet, pretty, fragile girl. She had loved him devotedly. But his love—where was it now when she had been dead not quite a year? It had long burnt out, cold ashes, years ago—gone before their first child was born.

"Agnes had kept him down in life," he said. "She had always been a dead weight on him. If she had been a different woman, he thought, 'he might have won a higher place in the world. And there was Laura, a perfect copy of her mother—a pretty face, but nothing else, no mental force!'"

Long he sat in his library alone and pondered moodily. Until, after having finished a bottle of wine and smoked several cigars, he fell asleep with his head resting upon the back of the chair.

Sleeping in this uncomfortable attitude, with his head full of the fumes of liquor and tobacco, it was scarcely strange if Archibald Arnsdale dreamed a bad dream.

He thought that he was standing near a large tree overhanging the ravine at the back of the house. All was dark and gloomy, and a stillness like the stillness of death reigned over the whole scene. Not a breath of wind moved the leafy branches of the trees, and the waters of the brook seemed stagnant.

He tried to move away from the place, but was unable to stir hand or foot. Some spell that he could not shake off held him fast.

Presently a faint glimmer of the moon pierced athwart the universal gloom, and in the faint, uncertain light a shadowy figure came creeping to the opposite edge of the chasm.

It was the face of Isabelle Evelyn.

The shadow looked across at him, and then lifting a white, transparent hand, with a triumphant smile, pointed to the bottom of the deep hollow where the filthy water lay.

He looked down. As first he saw nothing until the moon shone out fuller, and then there glimmered, cold and white beside the stream, a tombstone with this inscription:

"IN MEMORY OF ARCHIBALD ARNSDALE, AGED 49."

He awoke suddenly with a cry, and just then a sharp, light knock sounded on the library door. He was bewildered for a moment, then said, "Come in."

And in obedience to his invitation, the handle was turned, and the door gently opened.

"Good God! is it you?" said Mr. Arnsdale, in a wild whisper.

Isabelle Evelyn stood before him.

(To be continued.)

#### WITH CLEARER VISION.

BY CARLOTTA BERRY.

I saw to-night the man I loved  
Three little years ago.  
I did not think so short a time  
Could change a mortal so!

There were none like him in those days.  
So strong, so true, so wise;  
He had a lofty, marble brow,  
And tender, soulful eyes.

A voice of music, hair by which  
The raven's wing would seem to  
But pale indeed; a face and form  
To haunt the sculptor's dream.

But when I looked at him to night,  
I saw no single trace  
Of the old glory; only just  
A very common face.

No marble brow, no soulful eyes,  
The face was round and sleek  
That once to my love-hunted eyes  
Was so intensely Greek.

I know full well he has not changed  
So very much, Alas, me,  
But I was blind in those dear days,  
And now, alas! I see.

'Tis very dreadful to be blind,  
Of course, and yet to-night  
I should be happy to be blind,  
Had not received my sight.

One little thought will trouble me—  
I only wish I knew  
Whether he still is blind, or if  
His eyes are open, too.

## The Fresh of Frisco;

OR,

### The Heiress of Buenaventura.

A Story of Southern California.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF-DEN," "THE WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "THE CHILD OF THE SAVANNA,"

"PRETTY MISS NELL," "THE MAN FROM TEXAS," "ACE OF SPADES,"

"OWLS OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC., ETC.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### A BATTLE RYXAL.

So suddenly did the sport arise from his place of concealment that for a moment the astonished men gazed upon him with wonder-stricken eyes, just as if he had been an airy spirit from another world, rather than the bold mortal of solid flesh and blood which he was.

Blake was dressed exactly the same as he had been when he had first made his appearance in the mining camp, no sign of arms or traces of hostile intent, but he rose as quietly and faced the well-armed band, who were evidently on blood and slaughter bent, as calmly as though there were no bad blood between himself and the desperate men of Tejon Camp.

No sign of arms the sport displayed, we say, and each and every member of the invading band noted this fact at the first glance, but Blake was no stranger to them now, and they all understood that the man of ice and iron never was more dangerous than when he smiled and appeared harmless.

"Halt!" he cried, as he rose in view.

And the promptitude with which the advancing band stopped, rooted as it were in their places, when the command reached their ears, was something wonderful.

"How are ye, alcalde?" Blake continued. "I feel quite delighted at seeing you so near my hunting-ground. I may be allowed to make an example of you so as to deter other rash men from attempts to dispute my power in this hyer region."

"You are a bold, impudent blade!" the alcalde exclaimed, scowling darkly, "but I give you my word, if you don't stop your joking to-day and that I'm here on business."

"So I supposed, judging from the looks of your escort."

"You and Sandy McAlpine have been riding a pretty high horse and it is about time that you and all like you, understood that I don't allow any such going-on in my neighborhood. I've come after Stuart McKerr, and if you know when you are well off you will surrender him at once and give yourself up at the same time; otherwise I may be obliged to make an example of you so as to deter other rash men from attempts to dispute my power in this hyer region."

"Oh! you think that you are supreme master here, then?" retorted Blake, in a tone which was extremely exasperating.

"I am master hyer!" the alcalde angrily responded.

"I'll go you ten to one on that!" the Fresh cried, in a tone which was equally exasperating.

"A band of cutthroats that I'll string up to the pines on these hillsides one of these days like onions on a roe as a warning!" the alcalde exclaimed, defiantly.

"As a warning that you don't want any cutthroats around except the scoundrels that follow your lead!" Blake suggested, and at this home-thrust there came up, like an echo from amid the rocks and stunted pines, a sort of chorus of "Haw-haw!"

"Have I not said that the scoundrel-like sound that caused the alcalde and his men to grasp their weapons and glare earnestly and anxiously around them."

Blake smiled as he beheld the astonishment and alarm of the invaders.

"As a warning, gentlemen!" he cried in his light and airy way. "It's only one of our old mountain echoes. We have very strange echoes up here in the mountains, sometimes."

From the alcalde downward there wasn't a man in the band but understood that the cool but desperate sport was making game of them. His confident manner puzzled them. Had they been led into a trap? Had the trail purposely been made plain and easy so as to entice them up into this wild and desolate spot and into an ambush?

It looked like it, for, to the fevered imaginations of the astonished band, the chorus of invisible "haw-haw!" seemed to come from a score of throats, and to entirely encircle the little glade where they stood.

Anxious then were the looks that the band cast around them, and dark the angry scowl upon their rugged features.

They were all bold and careless men, reckless of their own lives and of the lives of others, yet, bold and reckless as they were, and as cheap as they held their lives, it was not agreeable to think that they had walked blindly into an ambush, and that they were at the mercy of a concealed foe who only waited for a given signal to pour in a deadly fire upon them.

"And now, my bold alcalde," continued Blake, "since you have delivered your ultimatum, just listen to mine. You are all utterly at my mercy. You have walked into a trap from whence, for the greater part of you, there is no deliverance except by a descent into the valley of death, and how many of you bold, rough scoundrels are ready to die?"

If the question had been put to them in the town of Tejon Camp, not a man in the band but would have protested stoutly that he held his life no dearer than a pin's fee, and was ready

at all times to risk it, and would at once have fought unto the death any rash man who dared to say to the contrary; but in this wild spot, this bit of unknown ground, confronted by a man whose equal for cool hardihood had never yet stepped foot in the Mohave valley, these men of bloody, reckless lives felt the warm courage oozing out at their finger-ends, and the cold taint of fear beginning to sap their stout hearts.

"That is a question that you had better ask yourself and prepare at once to answer it!" the alcalde cried, roughly.

"And why should I prepare to answer it?" Blake asked, with that arrogant coolness which in him was so exasperating.

"Why?" the alcalde fairly shouted. "Why? Dim just understand for my bold back, that we have come after you and the boy whose quarrel you have so rashly taken upon your shoulders, and now that we have run you to earth, all that you can do is to surrender at once or else, inside of five minutes, there'll be one bold sport the less in California!"

Blake laughed in contempt.

"You pig-headed fool!" he exclaimed; "do you suppose that if I was helpless and without backing, I would have allowed you to track me so easily? Oh, no! It was my game to lead you to lye you into a trap, from whence with life you will never escape. You are completely surrounded by my men, not one of your force but is covered by trusty weapons in the hands of sharp-shooters whose superiors ain't to be found on all this hyer Pacific slope. I just rose out of my ambush to give you fair warning—to save the shedding of blood, if you are at all inclined to listen to reason. I've no quarrel with all of you men, but this gentleman, my bold alcalde, is my mutton; and now I've got him just where I want him. The rest of you can git!"

For answer the alcalde deliberately raised his rifle and pulled back the hammer.

"Is it war?" Blake cried; "look out for yourself, then!"

The alcalde pulled the trigger, but at the very moment that the piece was discharged, Blake dodged down behind the rock which had previously sheltered him and the bullet whistled harmlessly over his head.

As the alcalde pulled the trigger, the crack of the rifle on the still mountain air, and a dozen echoes, each one as strong as the original report, repeated the sound.

No empty, harmless echoes, these phantom-like "echoes" of sudden bullets came whistling from the stubby clumps of pines and from the cover of the boulders, behind which the secret foe was ambushed.

No foolish boast had the Fresh of Frisco made when he had declared that he had the invaders in his power.

The effect of the volley was terrible—six of the alcalde's men were down, either slain outright or badly hurt.

And the deadly fire continued, too, dropping, irregular shots, the two to retrace their way to the stronghold of the Wolves in the mountain, we will follow the footsteps of the defeated ruler of the Mohave valley.

Black had quite a reputation for a great many gifts among the Tejon Campites; but, as a runner, he had never been counted much, yet it is quite doubtful if there existed a man in all the Mohave valley, white or red, who could have beaten his "time" that day.

Winded and weary, full of rage at his defeat, and with a great scheme of vengeance upon the man who had so completely beaten him at his own bold game, the alcalde approached the mining town, and, just at the same moment, from different points in the foothills, came other breathless and haggard men, one and all bearing marks of the terrible exertion which they had made.

The alcalde halted and surveyed them with eyes inflamed with rage—not with rage toward them, but toward the cunning foe who had so routed and humiliated them.

It was the first time since the founding of Tejon Camp that the alcalde and his bold fighting men had ever been compelled to skulk home like beaten curs.

The men gave ample proof of the desperate nature of their struggle through which they had passed, for one and all were bleeding from ugly wounds. The flight and the hot pursuit had been as bad as the battle, terrible as had been the surprise of the ambushade. The alcalde was the only man who had been fortunate enough to escape without a wound.

Five men straggled forth from the pines of the foothills and came doggedly forward to meet their leader, and each and every man shook his head as he came up to the alcalde, as if to say: "It wasn't my fault; my blood and wounds show that I fought like a tiger!"

"And are you all that is left?" cried the alcalde, with blazing eyes, as he looked upon the faces of the good, stout men who had so often backed his quarrels.

"Caramba!" exclaimed the Mexican, who had been one of the fortunate ones, and succeeded in escaping with only a slight flesh wound, "I think that there is not many more. What would you have? They slaughtered us like sheep in that trap, and then chased us through the mountains like so many devils. By the bones of all the saints! I never ran so fast before since I was born!"

"Five—only five left!" the alcalde cried, seemingly unable to convince himself that the massacre could have been so terrible.

"Why, half of us went down at the first fire before we had a chance to return a shot!" another one of the band exclaimed.

And then they followed us as we fled as fast and as close as our own shadows!" the Mexican ejaculated. "Caramba! if I live to be a thousand years old, I shall never forget this day's work!"

"Nor I—nor I," the alcalde repeated, slowly. "Well, it's done now and can't be undone, but our backs will come, boys, and then we'll pay back what we owe for this day's work with double interest."

The members of the gang made wry faces at each other: they were quite satisfied to let the matter stand as was; they had not the slightest desire to ever face the dare-devil sport and his followers again.

"You had better enter the ranch by the back door, boys," Black suggested. "I don't care about every one in the town knowing that these fellows have flaxted us; and mind, keep a still tongue in your heads about what has transpired to-day."

Of course they swore that they wouldn't breathe a word to mortal, and then they all proceeded to the hotel.

The alcalde went at once to his private apartment and washed off the stains of the battle and flight, then proceeded to recharge his weapons. Hardly had this been done when the door opened, and Stuart McKerr, pale and agitated, walked into the room.

The alcalde started to his feet in surprise.

"Ah! you have escaped!" he cried.

"No! I was released to bring you a message."

"A message?"

"Yes, a challenge to mortal combat."

And before the alcalde could cry aloud his astonishment at this, the loud, bold voice of Jackson Blake rung out, clear as the tone of the herald's trumpet, in the street of the mining camp!

like a gentleman, selling his life as dearly as possible."

"He who fights and runs away—" quoted Sandy.

"Will live to fight another day," eh?" cried Blake, finishing the quotation.

"Let us pursue him at once!"

"What, after the start that he has got?"

"I think that I am woodman enough to lift the trail."

Do you think you can over these bare rocks find leaves no mark of human footstep?"

"Yes," replied Sandy, confidently.

"Well, go ahead; that sort of thing is out of my line."

McAlpine in truth was a pretty good tracker, and almost as good on the trail of a flying foe as any red devil that ever lifted hair, and the alcalde in his headlong flight had not taken any pains to disguise his trail; in fact, he had no time to accomplish this if he had wished to; and so, in spite of the bad nature of the ground which rendered the task a difficult one indeed, McAlpine soon "lifted the trail," in mountain parlance, and fast he and Blake followed in the footsteps of the flying man.

Little hope had the Fresh, though, of overtaking the fugitive, for he reasoned shrewdly that, with the start that the alcalde had gained, such a thing would be almost impossible. And so it proved; for, after following the trail clear down to the foothills, where it struck the regular old Indian path, and was lost amid a dozen other tracks, the pursuers were forced to give up the chase.

"Satan himself protects this man!" McAlpine exclaimed, in anger, as he came to an unwilling halt.

"No doubt, no doubt!" Blake replied, in a tone of perfect conviction, "and the big chief with horns and tail has no better servant than the alcalde of Tejon Camp."

"I had a chance at the scoundrel three or four times, but I waited until I could be sure of my game," Blake remarked in a regretful tone.

"And so missed it altogether!" Blake cried, laughing. "Now, in future take pattern by me—always 'pull on a man if you think you have half a chance of hitting him; that's my rule always, and it's these snap-shots—nearly all of which are more luck than man'smanship—that have given me the reputation of being one of the best men at the trigger on the coast."

"I'll crack at him the next time, whether I think that I can hit him or not!"

And that next time will come very soon," Blake remarked, as they struck back into the upper trail again.

"The sooner the better!" Sandy replied.

"I reckon that in this little affair to-day we have laid out one-half to two-thirds of the best fighting men the alcalde could muster in his outfit camp, and now I think that the man who takes Alex Blake by the beard won't have to be backed by an army."

Significant words when coming from the lips of Jackson Blake.

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"Nor I—nor I," the alcalde repeated, slowly. "Well, it's done now and can't be undone, but our backs will come, boys, and then we'll pay back what we owe for this day's work with double interest."

The members of the gang made wry faces at each other: they were quite satisfied to let the matter stand as was; they had not the slightest desire to ever face the dare-devil sport and his followers again.

"You had better enter the ranch by the back door, boys," Black suggested. "I don't care about every one in the town knowing that these fellows have flaxted us; and mind, keep a still tongue in your heads about what has transpired to-day."

Of course they swore that they wouldn't breathe a word to mortal, and then they all proceeded to the hotel.

The alcalde went at once to his private apartment and washed off the stains of the battle and flight, then proceeded to recharge his weapons. Hardly had this been done when the door opened, and Stuart McKerr, pale and agitated, walked into the room.

The alcalde started to his feet in surprise.

"Ah! you have escaped!" he cried.

"No! I was released to bring you a message."

"A message?"

"Yes, a challenge to mortal combat."

And before the alcalde could cry aloud his astonishment at this, the loud, bold voice of Jackson Blake rung out, clear as the tone of the



know his life was at stake—he had been taught something in swordsmanship.

"Aid me, or he will kill me!" suddenly cried Colonel Guarena, losing all nerve, and as he spoke there was heard the sound of hoof-strokes.

The Monté Prince turned quickly in the direction of the sound, but a cry from Colonel Guarena caused him to spring to his side. Merle had run him through the body.

"Sainted Maria! he has killed me!" groaned the wounded man, as the Monté Prince lowered him to the ground.

Wiping the stain from his rapier, Merle faced the Monté Prince.

"Señor, I am at your service now."

As he spoke, a score of *Lanceros* dashed up to the spot, drawing rein in a circle round the dismounted party.

"Seize that murderer, Señor Juarez!" yelled the Monté Prince, in tones of thunder.

A score of lances pointed at the breast of Merle—resistance was vain, and without a word he surrendered himself a prisoner.

Had he known what was to follow, he would have died then and there, with his good rapier in hand, rather than lay down his arms and expect mercy from his captors.

## CHAPTER XLV.

## BLOOD-MONEY.

It was with no little surprise depicted upon his face that Major José Juárez—for the young man had been promoted to the rank formerly held by Vistal Guarena—gazed upon the scene before him in the gathering twilight.

When the *Lanceros*, Major Juárez, has caused this, now, make all amends in your power," sternly commanded the Monté Prince.

My delay was unavoidable, Don Felipe, the Señora Guarena demanded my presence as I was about to leave the castle; important dispatches had arrived from the Capital—the Governor severely wounded! and he bent over Vistal Guarena, who was breathing heavily.

"Desperately so, I fear. I have stanching the bleeding as well as in my power, and I wish you to have him borne with all haste to the castle. I will look after this prisoner," and the Monté Prince turned toward Merle.

"Señor, for the present you are a prisoner, and must submit to being treated as such."

Merle made no reply, and his wrists were at once encircled by the chains.

"Now, señor, we will mount and ride on: please take this horse," and the steed of Colonel Guarena was led up. Merle quickly mounted, with the aid of the Monté Prince, who then sprung into his saddle, and followed by a dozen *Lanceros*, they rode away.

Behind them followed Major Juárez with the wounded Governor, borne upon the lances of the soldiers.

When Merle found himself in the saddle, his first impulse was to dash away, and ride, ironed as he was, into Vera Cruz.

But a second thought convinced him that as a stranger he would have no influence there to counteract the power of the Castle's Governor and that of the Monté Prince, who he now knew was all powerful.

If he appealed to the United States Consul at Vera Cruz it would have to be in his proper person of Merle Grenville, and under that name he was already outlawed by his Government, and a price set upon his head.

No; he must accept the alternative and trust to luck for escape.

By his side rode the Monté Prince, a smile upon his face, and behind came the *Lanceros*, their lances in rest.

In a short while they drew rein upon the beach, where a small boat awaited; it was the intention of the wary gambler to enter the castle by the sea entrance.

Entering the boat, in which sat two oarsmen in the castle uniform, the Monté Prince and his prisoner were rowed rapidly away, the *Lanceros* returning to join their comrades who carried the wounded Governor.

A short row and the boat touched at the castle stairs; the party disembarked, and were met by a file of soldiers who marched them through a gateway near the bastions.

"Captain of the guard, lead this prisoner to one of the deep sea cells, and upon your life, see to it that he escapes not," said the Monté Prince, whose word was law even in that grim old castle.

The young officer addressed saluted politely, and replied:

"Upon my life be it, señor. In the water dungeons, you say?"

"Yes, to one of those beneath the sea?"

"And from him, señor?"

"Assuredly," and the Monté Prince walked away, while Merle was led off to the lowest of the castle dungeons.

Turning into a broad corridor the Monté Prince ascended a stone stairway until he came to a second hallway leading to the left, and this he followed, through a number of doors, until he reached a room perfectly familiar, until he found himself still surrounded by stone walls, but where the gloom was banished by draperies of velvet and silk curtains which but half closed the broad windows.

At a massive mahogany doorway, studded with silver nails, he pulled a bell-cord, and a servant in livery bade him enter.

"The Señora Guarena?"

"Is in her boudoir, señor," replied the servant.

"I will seek her there; now go with all haste and bid the surgeon of the castle to come hither; then bid the officers to allow no noise about the castle."

"The Señora Guarena?"

"Is in her boudoir, señor," replied the servant.

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"The Señora Guarena?"

"Is in her boudoir, señor," replied the servant.

The *Lanceros* marched into the room, still bearing their burden, and he was placed upon a cot, while the surgeons gathered around him.

The young bride gazed down into the white face, and her own was nearly as white; but she uttered no cry, as she sunk down upon her knees beside the cot and lightly kissed the forehead.

"Señor," and she looked imploringly up into the face of the chief surgeon.

"I will soon tell you, lady Guarena if there is hope," responded the surgeon, understanding her glance, and he set to work with his assistants to discover whether the Castle de Uloa would soon be without a Governor.

"It is a most ugly wound, piercing through and through his body, and he has lost much blood. He may live—he may die; the chances are he will—live."

"Holy Mary, I thank thee," breathed the young wife, and she glided from the room.

Still the Monté Prince remained, and one by one the attendants dropped away, until only the second surgeon, who had been appointed to watch beside the wounded Governor, and Don Felipe remained.

"Señor Mejía, you were to have paid me two thousand pesos, last night," said the Monté Prince quietly, turning upon the assistant-surgeon of the castle.

"Señor," but it was impossible. Oh, señor, I am ruined, for I have not a peso in the world, and my pay is hypothecated to Moncardo, the Jew. Señor Don Felipe, I am ruined, and the Mexican groaned in bitter anguish.

"You should not gamble, señor Mejía. You play badly, and have no nerve; what will you do?"

The Mexican hissed out the word, savagely.

"Doubtless you know the easiest and pleasantest mode of living an alchemist; but *living* is preferable to dying, señor."

"I dare not, Don Felipe."

"Let me see, Mejía, you owe me two thousand pesos, don't you?"

"All I have is pledged, señor, and I am in debt a thousand pesos besides," groaned the debt-crushed man.

"In all, how much, I ask?"

"Four thousand pesos would clear me, señor."

"That amount would save your life, you mean?"

"Yes, señor, there is danger, but—"

"Suppose one were to occur, it would prove fatal, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, señor, I fear so."

"And if a second one were to occur it would certainly prove fatal."

"Without any doubt, Don Felipe."

"Señor Mejía," and the Monté Prince bent over the wounded man.

"You will have to stop this bleeding. See, the Governor bleeds freely."

As he spoke the Monté Prince passed his hand quickly over the wound, and the red stream of life burst forth.

Agast, the Mexican surgeon started back, a cry upon his lips; but the calm voice of the Monté Prince recalled him to himself.

"Be quick, Señor Mejía, or the Governor may bleed to death. Perhaps this may stanch the blood."

A roll of notes were in the outer pocket of his coat, and Benito Mejía saw at a glance they doubled the amount just given him, and a gleam of devilish joy flashed over his face as he thrust them into his bosom, while he called out:

"Ring for my chief, señor!"

The Monté Prince ordered a servant in the ante-room to call the chief surgeon, and then came back again to the side of the wounded man.

"This hemorrhage can be stopped, Señor Mejía?"

"Yes, Don Felipe."

"Did a second one, say in a day or two, would prove fatal?"

"Yes, Don Felipe."

"You will be constantly in attendance, Señor Mejía?"

"Yes, señor."

"Then I leave the case in your hands; you will see to it."

"Yes, Don Felipe," replied Benito Mejía, in a hoarse voice, while he turned deadly pale; but he held his blood-money and could not recede from the step he had taken.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## THE MEXICAN JUNTA.

In the grand old city of Mexico, where the Montezumas once held their court in magnificence, and where the "Children of the Sun" fell before their Spanish conquerors, a body of men sat in conclave within the walls of the Mexican capital.

It was the second day following the duel between Merle and the Governor of the Castle San Juan de Uloa, and those gathered in council were the Mexican Junta, the men who held in their grasp much of the governmental power of that unfortunate war-torn land.

News had been brought to them of the duel, and the Junta was in a state of great excitement. The Governor, and they were discussing the merits and influence of a number of distinguished personages, soldiers and statesmen, for the successor of Vistal Guarena, should be die.

The discussion was not a calm one, either, for the armed sentinels at the outer doors occasionally heard some voice raised in angry denunciation, and echoing through the gilded rooms with threatening ring.

And such denunciation was hurled upon his fellow-members of the Junta by one who held no fear for himself, whose life was *resu reproche*, and whose aid had been open and aboveboard as soldier and statesman.

He had cried down the injury done great men, by the appointment of Vistal Guarena to be Governor of that famous old pile, the San Juan de Uloa.

The Guarena are Mexicans, and true ones; they have wealth, and their name is well known abroad; to military titles, while they are the warm supporters of the Government in power," he thundered forth, in ringing tones.

"But, for a wise body of men to place over the Iron Gate of Mexico, to give the key of our sunny land into the keeping of a mere boy, though that boy be a Guarena, is a symptom of the most deplorable weakness, and I am sure that the Junta will be guilty of it, and I glory in the thought that I was not present to affix my signature to the order, which was a slight upon the famous chieftain of our country, who has laid on a hundred fields of battle and grown gray in the harness of a soldier."

"A good youth enough, and a dashing soldier; but one who should hide his diminished head in the very presence of those whom the imbecility of this august body placed him over."

"Out upon such ingratitude to the men of Mexico, when a boy, under the basilisk eye of a gambler, can rule the holy castle of the San Juan de Uloa."

"The señor Governor may be even now dead, and the words of the Señor Rozales may be but the words of a corpse," said one of the Junta, arising, and interrupting the fiery orator.

"Be it so, but the greater the honor to the old castle not to be ruled by a boy."

"And ye sit here, señores, to place in his shoes a man of no more renown—the *Capitán Santa Anna*," said the Mexican, so filled that *berroto* must be given the power that only heroes should hold."

"You say that Don Felipe Cosala asked the appointment of Vistal Guarena to be governor of the castle? And who is Don Felipe Cosala?"

"Are your secret lives such, señores, that a spy can make demands that you must grant?"

"And who is the friend of the *Capitán Santa Anna*?"

"His own sword," cried a voice.

"Then he has my voice in his favor, when older men with you, *refute* the castle's governorship. What is it, Señor Abello?"

"A messenger from Vera Cruz has just arrived, bearing important tidings. The *Boy Governor* is doubtless dead; if so, he has solved the riddle of death, and it is wiser than any of us," scornfully said the Señor José Rozales.

A moment after, and through the massive portals of the assembly room, came the tall form and dark, fascinating face of the Monté Prince.

Every man in that Junta knew Don Felipe Cosala, and the faces of two-thirds of them grew a shade paler.

As he advanced to the center of the chamber, the Señor José Rozales sprung again to his feet.

"Ah! you have come as the messenger from Vera Cruz," and there was a sneer in his tone.

"I have, Señor Rozales, and like the raven, my presence here foretells ill-tidings," calmly said Don Felipe.

"Death generally follows your footsteps, señor; you have come to tell us that the Castle San Juan de Uloa is without a Governor?"

"It is true, Señor Rozales; a second hemorrhage from the wound caused the death of the Governor."

"And his young bride?" kindly said Rozales.

"Is inconsolable, señores."

"In her eyes he was everything; in the eyes of

Mexico he was nothing—so let him pass away. Your business here is dead, Señor Cosala?"

"No, Señor Rozales."

"Ah, yes; the one who killed the Governor—what of him?"

"He is in a cell in the castle, Señor Rozales."

"Hail the challenge passed was an open and fair one; why imprison him?" angrily said the Señor Rozales, the face of the chief surgeon.

"The insult was open, the challenge and acceptance fair; but Don Merlino ran his sword through the body of his *Excelencia*, without warning; the Governor Guarena was the most even and matter-of-fact tones:

"I am Don Felipe Cosala, señores, a secret agent of the Government of Mexico, and the one who named Colonel Vistal Guarena for the Governorship of the castle, San Juan de Uloa."

"Señores, I have come to name the successor of the Governor Guarena."

Had a thunderbolt fallen into that gilded room, smothered calm face, or caused a shudder and gold-inlaid furniture, it could not have created a wilder excitement.

Every Mexican was upon his feet—every eye turned upon the Monté Prince, who stood perfectly calm in their midst.

"You! You! Who are you, that you dare dictate to the Junta of Mexico?"

Señor José Rozales hurled the words from his mouth as though they were intended to annihilate the gambler; but they did not change the smile on the dark, calm face, or cause a muscle to quiver.

He merely answered in the most even and matter-of-fact tones:

"I am Don Felipe Cosala, señores, a secret agent of the Government of Mexico, and the one who named Colonel Vistal Guarena for the Governorship of the castle, San Juan de Uloa."

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## CONJUGAL CONJUGATIONS.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Dear maid, let me speak  
What I never have spoke,  
You have made my heart quake  
Which never yet spoke,  
And for sight of you both my eyes ache as they  
ne'er before oak.

With your voice my ears ring,  
And a sweeter ne'er rung,  
Like a bird's on the wing,  
When at morn it has wung,  
And gladness to me doth it bring such as never voice  
brung.

My feelings I'd write,  
But they cannot be wrote,  
Ah, who can indite  
What was never indote!  
And my love I hasten to plight—the first that I've  
plote.

Yes, these I would choose,  
Whom I long ago chose,  
And my fond spirit chose,  
As it never yet chose,  
And ever on these do I muse as never man chose.

The home where you bide  
Is a blessed abode,  
Sure, my hopes I can't hide,  
For they will not be hode,  
And no person living has sighed as, darling, I've  
sode.

Your glances they shine  
As no others have shone;  
And all else I'd resign  
That a man could resign,  
And surely no other could pine as I lately have pined.

And don't you forget  
You would ne'er be forgot,  
You never should fret  
As at times you have fret;  
I would chase all the cares that beset if they ever  
besot.

For then I would weave  
Songs that seldom are wove,  
And deeds I'd achieve  
Which no man achieve,  
And for me you never should grieve as for you I  
have grove.

For these I'd swim  
Which no one ever swam,  
Your eyes I'd not dim  
And your joys I'd \* \* \*  
And your face on my heart I would limn as it never  
was lam.

I'm as worthy a catch  
As ever was caught;  
Oh, your answer I watch  
As a man never caught,  
And we'd make the most elegant match that ever  
was maught.

Let my longings not sink  
I would die if they sunk;  
Oh, I ask you to think  
As you never have thought,  
And our fortunes and lives let us link as no lives  
could be lunk.

## Snow-Shoe Tom:

OR,

## The Wild White Woods of Maine.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

III.

## CARIBOU NICK—THE HIBERNACLE AND THE

BEAR-FIGHT.

WHEN the quartette, gameless, and with the exception of Snow-Shoe Tom, disheartened, returned to the cabin between the two lakes, Chesuncook and Bannockburn, they found it inhabited by a lank specimen of humanity who, seated upon the three-legged stool, was complacently enjoying a pipe before the fire.

Wolf, the moose-dog, gave a joyous whine before the door was opened, and lost no time in throwing himself upon the tenant of the hut. Snow-Shoe Tom at once greeted the man as Caribou Nick, and the three runaways instantly recognized him as the gaunt Indian-fied fellow whom they had met at Mattawamkeag and from whom they had purchased the yellow dog.

Dick Dunkirk cast an evil eye at the dark-faced fellow, whose great hand was fondling the dog in a playful manner; and he recalled the information which the little snow-shoe-maker had lately imparted—the number of times which Caribou had sold the animal.

"So you missed the king-moose!" said the half-breed, eying the discomfited boys. "When I saw you at Mattawamkeag I said to myself: 'That's three cases of buck fever anyhow.' Say, how'd you like to try a bar?"

"Amazingly well, sir," answered Tim, quickly. "They do say that a bear will cure the buck fever, an' it's Tim O'Reggin who is sufferin' with the same, jes' now."

Caribou Nick left the stool, and exhibited his great stature to the boys. They had seen him at Mattawamkeag; but he had never looked so tall as he did then. His cap of sable-skin almost touched the ceiling of the snow-shoe-maker's cabin home, and he cut a grotesque figure in the firelight. Black in half-civilized garments trimmed fantastically after the Norridgewock fashion.

"I'll give ye a chance to redeem yourselves," he said, addressing the trio, but at the same time casting a glance at Tim. "I guess we kin find a bar for yer amusement."

The prospect of a tussle with the shaggy king of the white woods of Maine delighted the amateur Nimrods who were burning to avenge the defeat in the wooded valley. They clamored to be led upon Bruin and declared that they would wipe out the stigma that rested upon them by the encounter with the moose.

When they could be silenced, Caribou Nick told how he had accidentally discovered a hibernacle, sacred to the shaggy monster, during his journey to the cabin, and preparations were at once made for departure.

After a short rest in the cabin, the party set out, guided by the half-breed, at whose heels the moose-dogs trotted with a familiarity which did not please their late purchasers.

Caribou Nick carried an ax on his shoulder, and his long strides bore him rapidly over the whitened ground.

The journey to the hibernacle was not completed until the long streaks of dawn began illumining the east. When the half-breed paused and announced the end of the journey, the three boys looked about them surprised. They had expected to be led to a cave, down into which a descent would have to be made, and the bear fought, much after the manner in which Putnam had attacked the wolf.

But they found themselves in the midst of a forest of gigantic trees which had seemingly upheld the snows of centuries. Above them the white flakes lay on the stately limbs, and the ground was covered to the depth of a foot, or more.

"There's no cave here!" ventured Oscar, looking disappointedly at Caribou Nick.

"Cave?" echoed the half-breed. "Who said that was to be one? It's true that there's no cave hyar, but, youngster, you're standin' within twenty feet of the bar at this moment!"

With an exclamation of surprise, which drew a laugh from Snow-Shoe Tom, the boy started back and looked wildly about him.

Dick and Tim were none the less startled.

They could see no traces of the animal to seek whom they had left the cabin; the only footprints visible in the snow were their own and the dogs'. Beyond them the beautiful white surface was rumpled by a single track. And yet Caribou Nick had affirmed that they were within twenty feet of the bear.

"We can't be near the baste!" declared Tim, addressing Snow-Shoe Tom. "The man must be mistaken when he says that."

"Not at all, Caribou Nick was never mistaken in all his life!" interrupted the shoe-maker; "we'll find the bear presently."

Having enjoyed himself at Oscar's fright, Caribou Nick strode up to a large rock which leaned in a picturesque manner, and applied an ear to the bark near the root.

The others now hastened up, well knowing

that the half-breed believed the bear to be within. But the three hunters could see no hole at the roots of the tree, and they were again inclined to doubt Nick's sagacity.

"Boys, go up and listen," Caribou Nick said, as he stopped back from the tree and pointed to it. Our young friends hastened fearlessly to the monarch of the woods and applied their ears to the bark as they had seen the half-breed do. They were not long in hearing the sound of heavy breathing which appeared to come from the heart of the tree, and stepped back satisfied.

"Hole up thar!" exclaimed Caribou Nick, pointing up among the branches of the tree. "Bar go up an' crawl down to his nest."

He lay all winter on his own fat, just like the other bars, if man let him alone.

"I've read about that; but would never believe it," said Dick Dunkirk.

"They are said to be lazy and poor fighters when they are in this torpid state."

"Won't he lay by 'nibby," answered Caribou Nick with a knowing smile. "But now they fight well. We'll try this bar; him not been in tree very long."

The half-breed now struck the tree several heavy blows with the ax, and then listened. The breathing was heavy and regular as the tree's, which showed that the animal had not been roused from his lethargy.

To fell the tree would take a great amount of labor, and Caribou Nick decided to smother the monster out, a practice in vogue in every country where the grizzly or the black bear is found.

The torch was now lighted, and the half-breed ascended the tree, bearing the torch in his hands. This was no dirty job, as the tree's position was far from upright and stately, and in a few minutes the flame of the torch was in the branches, well up the trunk of the tree, opening which the climber found at the main fork.

Then he hastily descended and all backing from the tree, awaited results.

Caribou Nick hardly had reached the ground before a terrible commotion began in the tree. The fire had roused the lord of the forest, and he was uttering hideous growls while he fought the flame from the branches. It seemed to the three novices that he would overthrow the old tree in his struggles which were enough to shake the snow from the half-lifeless branches. It came down, white and beautiful, like a blanket, and the boys' heads were buried in it. Suddenly Caribou Nick, and the scrambling and scratching told the boys that the enraged bear was ascending to the aperture from which dense volumes of smoke were issuing.

Instantly rifles were made ready, and eyes were fixed intently upon the fork.

"Yonder he is!" suddenly cried several voices, as the ugliest head imaginable appeared in sight, and a gust of wind at that moment blew the smoke away.

There was a wild, fierce gleam in the savage eyes that looked down upon the group before the tree. The bear was mad.

"I'll make up for my moose shot now!" ejaculated Dick Dunkirk, lifting his rifle. "I claim the first pop."

"An' ye shall have it," said Caribou Nick. "Aim low, boy—jest under the left eye—an' ye've got 'im!"

Dick tried to obey Caribou's whispered instructions; he took a long, deliberate aim, and touched the trigger. Quickly following came the report, and the head, with an angry growl, disappeared.

"Hit!" said the young marksman, triumphantly; but the next moment all were startled by the half-breed's cry of "Look out!"

"Look out!" as well they should, for a great, shaggy body shot suddenly from the hole, and came down the tree like a huge cannon-ball.

Proned into the snow at the foot of the trunk Bruin fell heavily; but was on his feet in an instant.

"Hit him!" exclaimed Tim, glancing disdainfully at Dick. "An' it's plain as how ye never touched a hair on the baste."

But Dick was not going to admit that he had made another sorry shot. He saw blood on the snow about the bear; but before he could point to it as an evidence of his shot, the monster bounded forward.

There was a scattering of besiegers which, to say the least, was ridiculous. Oscar, falling over the yellow dog, floundered in the snow, from which the uncouth snow-shoes prevented him from rising at once; and his companions, Dick and Tim, were using their legs to good advantage in opposite directions.

The audaciousness of Oscar's situation occasioned a laugh from Snow-shoe Tom, which tingled the snow-buried boy's cheeks.

Dick Dunkirk looked over his shoulder and saw the little snow-shoe-maker stride straight toward the bear. Caribou Nick was holding the eager dogs off.

When within twenty feet of the animal, Snow-Shoe Tom halted and fired almost without taking aim. The bear stopped and rose on his hind legs, while a crimson tide poured from his side. For a moment he stood erect, and then fell over, dyeing the snow with his blood.

"Hurrah!" shouted Snow-Shoe Tom, and the next moment he sprang forward and alighted on the monster's side.

"Victory!" he continued to cry, waving his dainty coon-skin cap over his head.

Slowly and not a little "cut" over their hasty flight, the three boys came up and congratulated the young slayer.

"Never to run agin' by the howly spoons or Moses! That's the motto!" ejaculated Tim in his rich Celtic brogue.

"That's what we all say, Tim!" added Dick. "Tis, eh?" put in Caribou Nick. "You can't stick to that talk in these woods!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 471.)

## Not Quite a Tramp.

BY EDWARD WILLET.

"No tramps wanted here, young chap; so you may just jog along."

The speaker was a fine-looking and apparently an easy-going gentleman of middle age, who was standing leaning over a gate, looking out on the road. The gate opened on a gravel walk which led up to a two-story cottage. In front of the house, and at the sides, the ground was overgrown with trees, shrubs and flowering plants, which, to say the least of it, did not show careful tendance. Altogether, it was a bright, cheerful and attractive place.

So thought, no doubt, the stranger, whose head near the gate had provoked Mr. Horton's utterance. He was not an ill-looking young man—or boy, for he could not yet be twenty-one—but his clothes were ragged and dirty, his shoes were worn and muddy, and his general appearance was unkempt and disreputable.

He had stopped in the road, and had directed at the man, or at the house, or at the grounds, or at all three, a wistful look, which might intimate a wish or an entreaty. It was this look which Mr. Horton had answered, when he addressed the young fellow as a tramp, and advised him to "jog along."

"I am no tramp, sir," replied the stranger.

"You are not! Then your looks surely belie your nature. You can't deny that you have all the symptoms."

"That is true, sir. I know that I am poor and ragged, but I don't consider myself a tramp. I am looking for work."

"That's what they all say. They are all looking for work, and scared to death for fear they will find it. To say that you are looking for work is to advertise the fact that you are a tramp."

"I suppose I must be a tramp, then, but I wish I wasn't."

"You do! That's one good symptom, anyway. Are you sure that you don't want to run away from work, if you should find it, or lie down and go to sleep by the side of it?"

"I am sure that I am willing to earn my living, and anxious to get a chance to do so."

"What sort of work can you do?" asked Mr. Horton. "Everything in general, and nothing in particular."

"I know that I could put that yard of yours in much better trim than it shows now."

"Humph! That don't offer any opening. The flowers are my wife's pets, and she is like the dog in the manger about them—won't touch them herself, or suffer anybody else to touch them."

"I can draw your portrait, sir," suggested the boy.

"You can? Are you a wandering artist in disguise?"

"You asked me what I can do, and I know that I can do that."

"Any of the tools of that trade?"

The boy produced from the pocket of his ragged vest some crayons and the stump of a lead pencil.

"All right," said Mr. Horton. "I will try you at that job. Come in."

He opened the gate, and led the way to the house, the rest of the way he was a chair, one of which he offered to the boy.

"Want any more tools?" he asked.

"A sheet of drawing-paper, if you have it."

Mr. Horton brought out the required article, clamped upon a drawing-board; also some crayon-holders and a sharp knife.

"I am a sort of an architect," he said, "and keep these things on hand. But hadn't you better eat some lunch before you begin this business? You have a hungry look."

"I am not so hungry, sir, but that I am willing to earn a meal before I eat it. Will you have the kindness to sit down?"

"Side face, or front?"

"Side face, if you please. I can do that the best."

Horton seated himself, presenting his profile to the ragged artist, who went to work without more ado. His strokes were quick, vigorous and artistic, and in a surprisingly short time a capital sketch of Mr. Horton's head and shoulders appeared on the paper. The gentleman looked at it closely, and puckered his lips so as to produce a low and long-drawn whistle.

"I am not ready to pronounce you an angel, young fellow," he said; "but I say truly as you have done a pretty fair artist's work, though the entertainment is yet to come. Here, Emily! Bella! Come out here and witness a new sensation!"

Mrs. Horton hurried out on the piazza, with her young sister, Bella, and her little girl, Lulu. The three novices were enough to shake the snow from the half-lifeless branches. It came down, white and beautiful, like a blanket, and the boys' heads were buried in it. Suddenly Caribou Nick, and the scrambling and scratching told the boys that the enraged bear was ascending to the aperture from which dense volumes of smoke were issuing.

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 471.)

appointed. Northwick did not have the assignment, although he professed his ability to produce it as soon as the negotiation should be concluded, and Mr. Horton brought him to his house for the purpose of winding up the transaction. There he was confronted, greatly to his astonishment and dismay, with Abel Kentridge, and it was made evident to him that his swindling scheme was discovered.

The upshot of the interview was that Abel gained possession of his precious patent, and Northwick was glad to go clear of criminal proceedings.

"Now, my boy," said Mr. Horton, "if you will take me as a partner in this business, I will furnish the needed capital and push it, and I have no doubt that both of us will grind out good gold of money with your turbine wheel."

Abel gladly acceded to this arrangement, and the result soon became so satisfactory to both partners, that Mr. Horton heartily congratulated himself upon the fact that his supposed tramp had not taken his advice to "jog along."

It should be added that his pretty sister-in-law, Bella Gratton, also found in the same fact cause for self-congratulation.

## THE SORCERIES OF SCIENCE.

BY AN OLD-SCHOOL MAN.

Day by day in this wonderful age,  
Is announced some wonderful invention,  
Fit to puzzle the brains of a sage  
And far past my poor comprehension.  
You can talk by the telephone-wire,  
Seas far with electric celerity;  
To the photograph they that aspire  
May their voices transmit to posterity.

In my youth 'twas once thought a vain dream  
That the streets could be lighted with gas;  
To expect locomotion from steam  
Was accounted the hope of an ass.  
A guffaw, as yesterday, rings  
In mine ears from the days long ago  
When, at what seemed ridiculous things  
Our grandfathers laughed, Ho! ho! ho!

And I still have some fear in my mind  
That this science will end in confusion;  
That its marvels at last we shall find  
To have been but old Harry's illusion.  
We shall suddenly wake up some day,  
In astonishment round us to stare,  
To find visions have vanished away  
And the good old times still as they were.

Oh, for days on which memory dwells,  
When the hedgerows were sweet with muskroses!  
What if ceaseless were such close to wells  
And our nightgowns right under our noses?  
From your sewers what good have you got,  
Beyond fever-gens and bacteria?  
Tis no use, I say, to drain, typhoid was not,  
And we'd no such disease as diphtheria.

Now, if light's to be turned into day,  
The electric light next will give rise,  
I've no doubt, with its dazzling display,  
To some novel disease of the eyes.  
'Gainst the new lights I stand by the old,  
Though their sheen by comparison suffers!  
Oh, for your good old days, dip and mold,  
With your tinder-box, matches and snuffers!

## Walt. Ferguson's Cruise.

A Tale of the Antarctic Sea.

BY C. D. CLARK.

AUTHOR OF "FLYAWAY APOLO," "THE DIAMOND HUNTERS," "TEXTING IN THE NORTH WOODS," ETC., ETC.

IX.

## THE EXPLORERS—BLOODHOUNDS ON THE TRACK

—THE BITER BIT.

THE two set out together upon their exploring trip, bent upon finding out the mysteries of the strange land in which they found themselves. The expedition was not without its difficulties, and later they were climbing through rocky passes, great ice cliffs, and lichen-covered crags. They saw that they were out of the range of the ship, but were steadily bent upon finding out what lay beyond the country. Up they went until at last, reaching the crest of the hill, they saw before them a vast level plain, apparently boundless, although a dim gray line in the far distance showed where the next mountain range lay.

"It is a continent," cried the boy, enthusiastically. "It is more than an island, I tell you."

"That ain't nothing," declared Zip, dogmatically. "Don't I tell you an island is any amount better than any of your blamed continents?"

"You don't care much for science, Zip."

"Science be blowed! I don't see no sense, I don't, in cruisin' round this yer heathen country, but, if you are bound to see it I'm bound to follow arter an' see what kind of cussedness you kin get into. Did you see the look the mate gave you when you left the ship?"

"No."

"Then I did. He gave you a look that meant business. If he gets a lick at you he's jest going to do it. D'ye happen to know what I've got?"

"Little playthings; jest look at 'em!"

He thrust his hand into his bosom and drew out two heavy navy revolvers, and the boy saw at a glance that they were loaded.

"What did you bring them for?" demanded the boy.

"If you don't find out before you get back then I'm a lunk-headed thief and a pirate. And to begin, jest take a look on the back track."

As the boy turned and looked back, and saw that four men were upon their trail, men who moved rapidly, bending forward like bloodhounds on a scent. Even at that distance the boy could see that the foremost among them was Portugee Pete, and that his companions were the marked men of the Ellen Floy.

"I don't understand," said the boy, "what do they want; why do they follow us?"

"They want your life!" hissed the old sailor.

"It ain't no more mine, but at the same time they'll put me under the snow, too, if they kin."

"That is Ned Travers, Black Dave, and Rube Rodgers, three as infernal scoundrels as ever lived on the face of the earth. I tell you we've got to look out for ourselves. Take one of these shooters and keep it out of sight. Do you know how to use it?"

"I guess I do!" averred the boy, with a smile. "Do you think we will have to use them?"

"Not if I kin help it. I'm going to keep out of their way if I can, but if I can't I'll do the next thing and fight for my life. I reckon you'll do the same. I only wish we had big Sam with us, and we'd make them fellers so sick—oh, how sick we would make 'em!"

They descended the ridge out of sight of the coast and began to run. And now, for the first time, the boy realized that, old as he was, there was plenty of life in Old Zip yet. He ran with the agility of a youth, and soon they came to a place where a great crevasse crossed the plain, something like a crack in the ice, which descended gradually into a long valley, fringed on both sides by low shrubs. Into this the old sailor sprang, and half-way down he paused suddenly and called to the boy to conceal himself amid the bushes. They were scarcely out of sight when the four men in pursuit came over the crest of the ridge and looked across the plain. The ones they sought were nowhere in sight. An exclamation burst from the throat of the Portugee as he could no longer see them.

"If they get away, Black Dave, I cut your heart out," he cried. "You so slow; you snail!"

"Where have they gone?" asked the sailor known as Black Dave, the one who had objected to the punishment of the Portugee. "They ain't sunk into the earth, have they?"

The Portugee only replied by bending forward to examine the earth, and soon took up the trail, and advanced on a run, showing great skill as a trailer. His course soon took him to the edge of

the crevasse, and a cry of joy broke from his lips.

"They gone down here!" he exclaimed.

"We find 'em now!"

The four began the descent of the crevasse, and soon passed the place where the two were hidden. A turn in the pass quickly hid them from view, and instantly Zip sprung out and began to run back over the course they had so lately pursued.

"I've explored all I want to," he said, as the boy ran by his side. "I dunno how it strikes you."

"Hold on, there!" cried a voice behind them. "Where are you running to? What are you afraid of?"

It was the voice of Black Dave, and he came tearing up the ascent rapidly, followed by his companions.

"Them fellers," said Zip, as he ran on by the side of his companion, "ain't got any weapons but their knives, and they don't know we've got shooters. Let's wait for them at the top and fight it out."

"I'm with you," responded Walt, quietly. "Here they come."

The four men, panting for breath, had nearly reached the top, when the voice of Old Zip rung out, sharp and clear:

"Hold on, thar! Stop, or it will be the worse for you!"

The men stopped in some confusion.

"Now, we kin talk just as well whar you are as we could nearer together," called out Zip. "Jest spit it out; say what you want."

"We were going with you," Black Dave answered.

"Is that the reason you brought Portugee Pete along? He loves you, don't he? Wants to fall on our necks and embrace us, don't he? Wal, he'd better try it!"

"Mebbe you want a muss!" cried Dave, angrily, beginning to advance. "I'd have you know, you old rip, that I've had a bone to pick with you ever since I came aboard the Sea Lion. You put on too much style, you do; do you want to fight?"

"I don't keer if I do!" confessed Zip. "Now, look here, if you take another step I'll drive a harpoon through you, harpoon!" howled Dave, advancing rapidly. "You old thief, we came out to fix you two, and we'll do it."

"Draw!" ordered Zip, in a whisper.

The boy obeyed, and quick as thought brought his revolver to bear upon the burly figure of Black Dave.

A howl of rage broke from the lips of Portugee Pete.

"Rush on!" he cried. "Dey can't shoot."

"Let me give you a lesson. I am going to shoot you through the right cheek, like this!" and Walt's pistol gave a sharp crack.

Portugee Pete spun half round as the ball plowed its way through the flesh of his right cheek.

"Now, I don't want any man's life," said the boy, quietly. "I didn't shoot to kill, that time, but I am going to now. The first person who steps over that line is a dead man; do you hear?"

The four ruffians paused in utter dismay. They had looked for a rough-and-tumble fight, in which their knives would have the best of the argument. But the unexpected advent of pistols, in the hands of persons who shot so remarkably close, took them completely by surprise, and they halted on the spot, their line pointed out by the boy, and began to parley.

"See here, Zip," exclaimed Black Dave, "is this what you call fair fighting?"

"What do you call fair?" Zip asked; "four against two, you black thief?"

"Who said that?" cried the boy, "I ain't fight you in any shape you say, nip and tuck, up and down, any way you choose. You've only to say the word."

"Oh, I don't care to grease my paws by touchin' yer dirty hide, Dave, my sweet youth. You stand there mighty still or I'll plug you."

"You coward!" screamed Pete, shaking his fist angrily at the boy. "You 'traid to give me a chance to get even."

"I'm sure I gave you a sound thrashing once," retorted Walt.

The only reply was a sudden and rapid rush on the part of the enemy. Walt raised his hand and the pistol cracked twice. Black Dave threw up his hands and fell like a log, shot through the collar-bone, and Pete clapped his hand to the other side of his face, for the bullet had marked him exactly in the same way upon the other side.

That stopped the rush. The others threw up their hands in token of submission. They evidently had had quite enough of that sort of sport.

"Now, I ain't got anything against you two and I'll leave you to take care of your friends. As for us, we are going back to the ship and I don't know whether the captain will take the trouble to send after that black thief or not."

"We weaken!" cried one of the men. "But, I tell you, my young bantam, if I had known what kind of a bird you were and how you were fixed, we'd have had shooting-irons as well as yours. The captain needn't send for Dave; we'll bring him in."

The two explorers turned their backs upon the beaten ruffians and were about to go away, when Walt wheeled suddenly and caught the Portugee in the act of turning to open his fist in his defenseless back. Again the pistol cracked, and the right arm of the ruffian dropped, broken, at his side.

"Now I hope you are satisfied," said the boy, quietly. "If you keep on fooling, there won't be enough of you left to make a good sized toothpick. Any of you gentlemen feel like throwing knives?"

"Not any for us!" was the reply. "Pete is a fool; he don't know when he is licked, but we do."

Again the two turned to go away, and this time they were not interrupted. Two hours later they came into the shed in a quiet way, and met Jack near the entrance.

"We met four of the men up there about four miles away and some of 'em got hurt," said Walt, quietly. "Perhaps you had better send some man to help them in. By the way—do you know why they tried to murder us?"

The face of the mate turned livid, and he went away without a word. For the third time he had failed in his design against the life of the gallant boy.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 465.)

Has the rich man ever stopped to consider that there are no baggage-cars on the road to Heaven?

MURDERERS are so common in Texas that the man dying a natural death in that State is looked upon as an impostor.

A VISITOR at a swell restaurant upset a tureen of soup on a lady's \$300 dress, and then said: "Do not worry, madam; there's plenty more soup in the kitchen."

SOME crusty, rusty, musty, fusty, dusty specimen of a man proposed the following toast at a celebration: "Our fire-engines—may they be like our old maids—ever ready, but never wanted."

A LITTLE girl who was spending a few days with a farmer uncle visited the barnyard, and while looking at the well-fed cows, remarked: "Why, uncle, just see, all the cows are chewing gum, aren't they?"

"When I with a little boy" lisped a very stupid society man to a young lady, "all my ideal in life were thentered on being a clown."

"Well, there is at least one case of gratified ambition," was the reply.

It is estimated that five thousand miners in the Pennsylvania coal regions are still out of employment. Why in the world don't they go to New York or Boston, and make a few thousand dollars by walking 30,000 quarter-miles?